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CONFIRMATION

AND

FIRST COMMUNION.

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“WHATEVER THY HAND FINDETH TO DO, DO IT WITH THY MIGHT.”—ECCLES. IX. 10.

BY THE LATE

REV. HENRY NEWLAND, M.A.

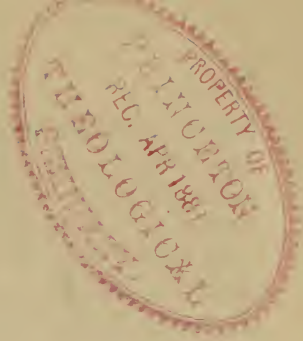
Third Edition.

LONDON:

JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,  
AND NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCCLX.

“ Come, child, the world thou must explore,  
From Paradise thou needs must go,  
And as thou roamest onward, so  
Thy whole life's region travel o'er;  
BUT, WHEN THY PILGRIMAGE IS DONE,  
HEAVEN WILL NOT FLY THEE, BUT BE WON.”  
*Franz Franzen, Bishop of Hernösand.*



TO THE  
RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.

---

*Westbourne Vicarage, Whit-Sunday, 1853.*

MY LORD,

The patron to whom a book is dedicated is a sort of guarantee to the public for the character of the book itself, a living synopsis of its contents. My book is a record of hard work and practical experience; I dedicate it therefore to the only Bishop on the Bench (I think I may say the only Bishop within the memory of man,) who having successively filled the offices of (1) Deacon, (2) Curate, (3) Incumbent, (4) Rural Dean, (5) Archdeacon, (6) Cathedral Dean, (7) Bishop . . . . . is able not only to instruct his Clergy theoretically, but to *show* them practically what their work should be.

Still, in dedicating my book to your Lordship, I would not have it supposed that I am seeking to shift from my own shoulders one particle of the responsibility which every one must incur who publishes his sentiments on matters of doctrine. Your Lordship may

possibly recognize here and there passages on which I have sought your advice, but whatever I may have written, if it was not my own originally, I have at least made it my own by adopting it.

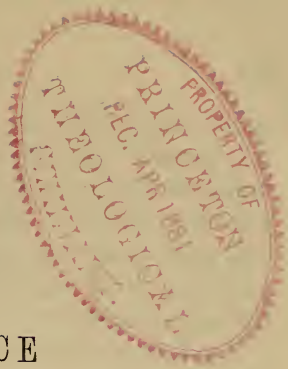
In truth, I seek no protection. If my teaching has been in accordance with that of the Church of England, the Church itself will give me all the protection I want. If I have exceeded or fallen short of that, I neither desire nor deserve it.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's

Faithful servant and friend,

HENRY NEWLAND.



## P R E F A C E

### TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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It was not without hesitation that in the first instance I published this book as the result of my experiences in parish work ; for work of this kind, easy and simple as it seems when put in practice in the ordinary conversations and catechizings and school examinations of every-day life, is by no means so simple and easy, when actually detailed on paper, and reduced to such a form as must necessarily subject it to public criticism ; then these every-day subjects are found to involve such difficult matters of doctrine, such abstruse questions of theology, and such deep mysteries of religion, that a man may well shrink from defining that of which he finds in many cases he has had hitherto only a vague and general idea.

I do not hesitate to say, that when I came to correct my book for the press, I found it a very much more difficult task than I had anticipated. Under these circumstances, I am thankful that now, when it has been a whole twelvemonth before the public, I am called upon to make so few alterations in my second edition.

(1.) One, at all events, I make with very great plea-

sure. I had stated my belief that our Lent Confirmation was a solitary instance. I find that the Bishop of Exeter frequently, and the Bishop of Oxford habitually and as a matter of duty, hold their Confirmations at that season, and that they have long ago adopted this practice for the very reasons which I give in my Introductory Chapter.

(2.) I do not think the objection that has been made to the word catechumen is of any great weight.

When I adopted this term to designate those whom I was preparing for Confirmation, I was perfectly aware that, strictly speaking, the word signified those who were under a state of probation as candidates for *Baptism*; but in those days, these candidates were generally adults, and their Baptism, Confirmation, and first Communion followed upon each other so closely, that the preparation for one was a preparation for all.

It is true that in these days we very seldom meet with catechumens in the strict ecclesiastical sense of the word. I have however retained the term as applicable to candidates for Confirmation, not only because the expression is etymologically correct, but because there is no other which describes that which I intended to describe, a person placed in a state of probation in order to ascertain his fitness for a certain privilege, and for that purpose periodically examined and taught by question and answer.

(3.) The objection that in the ancient Church the same sponsors were not admitted for Baptism or for Confirmation, falls also under this category. When Baptism and Confirmation followed closely upon each other, it was advisable that the Church should have double securities; but in those cases in which a considerable time intervenes between the two rites, the



same object is more effectually obtained, by requiring that the sponsors who undertook that the child should be Christianly brought up, should appear again before the Church, and give an account of the manner in which the duty has been performed. Hence probably it is, that though this rubric did exist in many of our ancient rituals, it was omitted at the Reformation, and, I believe, intentionally.

(4.) An objection has been made to Conversation No. 3, p. 181, on the Dangers of Habitual Confession. I cannot but think that my object in this conversation has been a little misunderstood: it has been imagined, that though I encourage Confession in young persons, I wish to discourage it in those who are older. As a general rule, I would discourage it neither in the one nor in the other; but I would point out the danger of urging this ordinance indiscriminately in any case whatever, for this is, as it appears to me, the mistake into which some of our young Clergy are falling. Confession to many is necessary—to all it may be advantageous; but it is a stimulant, and the tendency of all stimulants is to enervate. It is the duty of the Parson to urge the necessity of Confession on those to whom he considers it necessary; but while so doing, he should remember that he is not feeding, but administering a medicine, and he should watch the effect of that which he administers, because this, like all other medicines, becomes a poison when taken improperly; it is not either strength or nourishment—it may be *necessary* in order to correct something wrong, but if it be continued after it has done its office, it becomes injurious, and ought to be carefully and judiciously laid aside. It is very possible that the same person who ought to be discouraged now will require to be urged to Confession at some future

time; but the certainty that this will be the case hereafter does not make the medicine at all less dangerous now. I have been told that in this, my imaginary case, I ought to have heard the young man's confession as before, but given him a heavier penance. So very likely I might have done in practice: this course is certainly advisable under particular circumstances. All I mean to say is, that there are cases in which a man, and more particularly a woman, may be enervating his or her own character, and rendering him or herself more open to temptation, by acquiring a habit of relying on some one else, so that whenever the Parson sees symptoms of this, his duty is to stop it—and that this duty becomes more urgent upon him from the fact that it is exactly quiet, yielding, effeminate characters, those to whom a habit of confession is least necessary and most likely to be hurtful, who are most eager to confess; and at the same time it is the hard, stern, determined characters, those to whom the act of confession would be most beneficial, who are most impracticable. A young clergyman who knows it is his duty to urge men to confess, is very likely to do what is easiest to himself, and urge confession on the wrong people. This is a real danger; and in writing on the subject for the benefit of the young and inexperienced, it is a danger against which it is necessary to guard. I have considered this chapter over and over again. I have asked advice from those more experienced than myself, and I do not wish to alter one word of it.

(5.) The chapter on the "Outward Visible Sign and the Inward Spiritual Grace," I have entirely re-written; not that I wish to recal anything that I have said on the subject of the Real Presence, but that I wish to express the same idea in more reverent language. The

Real Presence is of necessity supernatural; the idea, therefore, is lowered, and, as it were, degraded, when we attempt to confine it within the hard outlines of mathematical definition; we cannot define that which, confessedly beyond the grasp of human intellect, is a matter of pure revelation. The Holy Eucharist is a Sacrament, and follows the law of Sacramental grace, which is as applicable to it, as it was to the Paschal Lamb or the sin offering of the Old Testament; but we can readily understand that in the actual Presence of the LORD'S Body there must be something higher, holier, more mysterious, and more unapproachably sacred, than in any other Sacramental institution.

I have contented myself, therefore, with a strict definition of the term "Sacramental Grace," and, premising that the grace of the LORD'S Supper partakes of this character, I think we shall do well to confine ourselves to the strict letter of Scripture in whatever we assert concerning it.

We are warranted in saying that the Inward Grace is united to the Outward Sign by the Prayer of Consecration, because it has been revealed to us that the cup of blessing *which we bless* is the participation (κοινωνία) of the Blood of the Anointed; and the Bread *which we break* is the participation of the Body of the Anointed. We are also warranted in saying that this Sacrament, this union of the Outward Visible Sign and the Inward Spiritual Grace is actually the LORD'S Body and the LORD'S Blood, because this has been revealed in so many words; that, in the case of "those who believe on Him," (S. John vi. 47) whoso eateth His Flesh and drinketh His Blood hath eternal life, shall live by Him now, shall be raised by Him at the last day, and shall live for ever, (S. John vi. 56—58), while he who is so faith-

less as not to discern the LORD's Body, eats and drinks damnation to himself, (1 Cor. xi. 29); and we are *not* warranted in saying that they are under any circumstances disunited, because we have no revelation upon which to found this assertion.

Thus far we are safe, for thus far we rest upon actual revelation; but whenever we proceed farther, and ask, "How can these things be?" then we begin to apply finite intellect to the comprehension of things infinite—to measure the ocean in the hollow of our hands.

I repeat, therefore, that in re-writing this chapter, I recal nothing of the doctrine which I intended to convey by it—my intention is to convey the same meaning in more reverent words; and *that* without attempting to remove the sacred mystery itself from that state of awful indefiniteness in which revelation has placed it.

The same subject occurs again in the sermon on the Sacraments, in which I compare the Roman Catholic, the Protestant, and the Church interpretations of the expression, "This is My Body," to an actual tract of land, to a picture of that land, and to the title-deeds of that land respectively. This idea, which was originally Archdeacon Sinclair's, I have left as it was, because it is a ratio, not a definition: it does not define, and is not intended to define, what the LORD's Body is—it expresses merely the relation which the Church's idea of it bears to that of the Romanist on the one hand, and to that of the Protestant on the other.

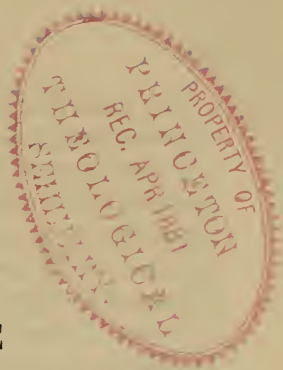
(6.) One addition I have made at the suggestion of a friend, who was kind enough also to furnish me with materials for making it. There certainly was an incompleteness in my work. I had conducted my catechumens to First Communion, but I had said nothing on the subject of the Service itself, nor on their own

behaviour and feelings during the celebration. This deficiency is here supplied by a Lecture to be delivered during the week before First Communion, and by a Sermon which is to form part of the First Communion Service. To make room for this, I have left out a Sermon on "The Church," which is a little foreign to the purpose of the book, and which will come in more appropriately in some subsequent publication.

This is all that I have in any way seen noticed: and in this my preface to the second edition, I would wish to express my thanks to those who have spoken or written to me on the subject of this work. I can assure them that every objection I have seen or heard I have not only carefully weighed, but have reduced to writing; and, having placed it alongside of my own statement, have submitted both to the judgment of some other person in whom I felt confidence. I felt, and I feel, that no one has a right to submit such a book as this to the public on his own unassisted judgment. The whole *responsibility* is mine, and I will not mention the names of my advisers, because I do not wish to divide it with them; but I have always considered part of that responsibility to be, that I was bound to neglect no means whatever of arriving at the true interpretation of the Church of CHRIST.







## P R E F A C E

### TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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My object in writing this book is to afford to my younger brethren in the ministry a guide in preparing their flocks for Confirmation, and to their catechumens a summary of Christian doctrine.

I make no claim whatever to originality. All modern literature, says one who is himself a very eminent modern author, is but the pouring of the same liquid out of one vial into another; and if this be true generally, as in a great measure it is, more especially is it true of theological literature. As with the kaleidoscope, the combinations are infinite, but the material which produces them all is limited. Truth is one, present it as you will.

Nor will I take it upon me to say that my book is altogether free from actual plagiarisms: I believe it is, I have looked over it carefully. But the sermons and lectures which it contains are the accumulations of years, they are selections from whole heaps, and I have always availed myself of any materials that came to hand, provided only they suited my purpose.

I am not aware that I have adopted anything without acknowledgment, but if I have, it matters not; my object is to present, not original ideas and new methods, but tested ideas and tried methods. I am giving to the rising generation of Ministers the results of five and twenty years' experience, two and twenty of them as Rector of this parish; what I give them, therefore, is not what I think or theorise, or what others have thought or theorised, but what I have tried and reduced to practice.

If this book has any value, it is simply this, that it is the record of so much hard work. The sermons have been preached, the lectures have been delivered, the catechetical meetings, public and private, have been held; and, if the words and sentiments recorded in the conversations are not the very words and sentiments uttered, as manifestly they neither could be nor ought to be, still they are specimens, showing what these conversations were like, and how the Christian doctrines and duties were taught in them. My younger brethren may feel perfectly certain that everything they meet with in this book can be done, for the simple reason that it has been done. I do not go quite so far as to say that everything has been done by me, much of it has, but at least everything I write about I have seen done, and have tested in its practical working.

The first idea of this book was suggested by a most useful department in the *English Churchman*, called "Parochial Work." Parochial work is precisely that for which my book is intended to be a guide.

It will be seen that, in this present work, the general plan of preparing catechumens for Confirmation and First Communion, is adapted for Lent and Easter, and for many reasons, doctrinal as well as practical, Lent



and Easter are the very best seasons that can be chosen for those ordinances ; but Lent Confirmations are very rare things to meet with. At that time of the year Bishops are more overwhelmed with Parliamentary business than they are at any other, and it requires a good deal of self-denial on their parts, and some arrangement also, to enable them to appoint that season. We of the diocese of Chichester have great reason to be thankful to our own Bishop, that we are able to present the public with a specimen,—a solitary one in our diocese,—of a Lent Confirmation.

I always follow, as every one ought to follow, the teaching of the Church, and adapt my own teaching to it ; at present, therefore, the machine is, as it were, set for Lent and Easter.

I therefore in this instance call upon my catechumens for watchfulness and self-examination at Septuagesima ; for penitence and self-abasement during the season of Lent itself ; I bid them on Good Friday die to sin ; rise to Christian light and life on Easter Day ; and then, as “ perfect ‘Christians,’” armed by their LORD, strengthened by His SPIRIT, nourished by His Communion, take their own places in the ranks of His army, that is to say, learn and practise their duties as Churchmen, by the Lessons of the great Forty days.

This is the Lenten setting of the machine ; but I might equally well have set it for the Sundays after Trinity, for I have done so frequently. It is not always that Bishops can find leisure to choose the fittest seasons. I might have commenced by the great Forty Days ; and thus, by taking as my means our duties as Churchmen, the privileges derived from our membership with CHRIST, the unity of His kingdom, our hopes of a future ascension, and of “ meeting the LORD in the air ”—together

with the present aid and constant sanctification, which the Church in general, and every individual member of it in consideration of his membership, is deriving from that Blessed SPIRIT, I might have taught the moral duties of the Sundays after Trinity as the effect and proof of membership.

Or again, I might have set it for Advent, thus—commencing by the Sundays after Trinity, and showing that the work and duty, which each after each unfolds, is no more than what might reasonably be expected from those who have been baptized in the Name of the Blessed Trinity, in consideration of their adoption by the FATHER, their redemption by the SON, and their sanctification by the HOLY GHOST; I might warn my catechumens that they are now about to be strengthened for that very work by God Himself, and might bid them, by self-examination, prepare for that great ADVENT of which this, in which they receive their first Communion, is but the type and the remembrancer.

These adaptations are easy, and I leave it for those who work upon my plan to make them for themselves, should the time for which their Confirmations are fixed render such adaptations necessary.

The Special Lectures with Questions for Self-Examination from the Commandments (p. 92,) the Conversations (p. 172,) the Heads of Catechetical Instruction, (p. 235,) the Hymns (p. 251,) the Letter on Infant Baptism (p. 367,) and the Certificate Cards, have been reprinted from this book; the Examination Papers (p. 211) belong to Parker's series of "Parochial Tracts," with whom arrangements have been made for supplying them. It has always appeared to me that something of this sort is absolutely necessary to work with, in order to preserve a regular system of instruction and

preparation, and to form a basis for the *vivâ voce* teaching.

Although the subject which I have taken in hand is from its nature of a practical rather than a controversial character, I have nevertheless thought it advisable to write more fully on one or two doctrinal points, which of late days have been called in question, and to show the sense in which these points were held by the Reformers as well as by the Primitive Church.

All teaching, however practical, must necessarily be based on doctrine ; but there is no reason why, because the doctrines are abstruse, the practical teaching which we found on them should be abstruse also.

Our teaching may be perfectly simple and perfectly open to the lowest capacity ; but, in order that it should be so, it is necessary that we ourselves have a clear and well defined idea of the doctrines upon which we teach, and a firm and full conviction of their truth and their unchangeableness.

The basis of my teaching in this book is the Sacramental theory, and the cognate doctrines of Confession and Absolution, as held by the Church of England, in contradistinction to the Church of Rome, and to all Dissenting bodies whatever, English or foreign. I show the sense in which these doctrines are held, and always have been held by the English Church, not only as the key to all my practical teaching, but as my warrant and authority for teaching at all. I have no desire, as I have no right, to teach according to my own theories, or my own interpretation of Scripture, or my own private judgment. I am the sworn servant of the Church of England, and as I understand her interpretation, so I, her Minister, the vehicle of her instruction, teach it to her children.

I have said that we owe our Lent Confirmation and our Easter first Communion to the Bishop of Chichester. I should have added, "by and with the advice of his Presbytery." All honour be to the Bishop of Exeter; he convened the first Diocesan Synod of modern times for the defence of the Church's doctrine. All honour be to the Bishop of Oxford, whose Synods, though less formal and regular, are constant. But the first Synod for the practical work of a diocese was summoned by the Bishop of Chichester, and our Lent Confirmation was the result of it.

In the autumn of 1850, the Bishop of Chichester directed his Rural Deans to convene their respective Chapters, in order to ascertain by deliberation and vote, what was the most fitting season for holding the announced Confirmation. The subject was regularly debated, and reasons given for and against particular seasons; the votes were formally taken, the reports of the Chapters were duly transmitted to the Bishop by the Rural Deans. The Bishop confirmed the vote of the majority, and acted upon it. It was a regular Synod.

Nor indeed is this a subject unworthy of the deep consideration and grave debate of a more formal Synod than ours was. Few people, except parish Priests who have had constant and lengthened experience in these matters, can understand the importance of fit seasons. The seasons of the natural year, the lengthening evenings, the unusual leisure, interrupted, and that only partially, by the spring sowing, the greater facilities for preparation, all these are subjects well deserving of thought. But far more than people of general education can possibly conceive, depends on the seasons of the spiritual year, which, being thus adapted to the feelings of the catechumens, in the first place are made

means of teaching and systems of preparation, and eventually become anniversaries and remembrancers of First Communion, its blessings, its privileges, and its duties.

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While these sheets were in the press, the following announcement reached me from the Bishop of Chichester, and as the exhortation to the godfathers and godmothers is so complete a confirmation of my own observations, I have requested permission of his Lordship to publish it.

“TO THE MINISTERS OF THE DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER.

“Reverend and Dear Brother,

“On the day and at the church assigned in the scheme below, I purpose, God willing, to administer the Holy Rite of Confirmation to such members of your Flock as, being of a *suitable*<sup>1</sup> age, and not having yet been admitted thereto, you shall then recommend and present to me for the purpose.

“Meanwhile, I request that you will read the following Announcement and Exhortation in your church, on one or more Sundays, as you shall judge expedient, after Morning and Evening Prayer.

“I remain,

“Your faithful and affectionate Brother,

“A. T. CICESTR.

“*Palace, Chichester, May 24th, 1853.*

<sup>1</sup> Be it observed, the Bishop does not take upon himself to determine what the “suitable age” is—he leaves that to the discretion of the parish Priests.



*“Announcement and Exhortation.*

“Dearly Beloved Brethren,

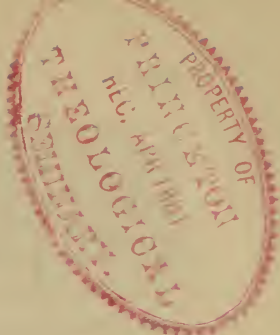
“I am directed by the Bishop to give notice, that he will, by God’s help, be ready to confirm such young persons, and others, of this parish, as shall be duly prepared, on Saturday, the thirtieth day of August, at Westbourne, where they are required to be at eleven o’clock.

“The Bishop further desires, through me, on this occasion, to remind godfathers and godmothers of the obligations they have contracted towards those for whom they answered on the day of their baptism; and the natural parents, likewise, of the obligations they contracted towards those godfathers and godmothers, towards the Church, and towards CHRIST, and the FATHER, and the HOLY SPIRIT, the one ever-blessed God, when their child was brought to the baptismal font in the Church’s faith, acting by the sponsors, and there laid in CHRIST’s arms, in the sure trust that He would receive and bless it as He did those young children who were brought to Him in the days of His flesh upon earth. Those obligations and responsibilities were nothing less than that, each in your sphere you should look to it that the children baptized ‘should be taught, as soon as they should be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise and profession’ you then made for them in their baptism. A season of Confirmation, then, is a season of inquiry, affecting all the parties before concerned in bringing an infant to baptism. Have you fulfilled the engagements then so solemnly entered into? Have you taken care that the children, who on your presentation of them, were admitted by the Church to baptism,

should, by yourselves, or by others, be taught the Creed, the LORD'S Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health? And you, who have not yet renewed in your own persons the vows that were then made for you, (that is, who have not yet been confirmed,) have you, as dutiful children, and faithful servants—according to your years,—of CHRIST, set yourselves to improve the privileges of your Christian calling, so as to be ready, now that you are of a sufficient age, to renew, with an understanding mind, and a willing heart, the covenant heretofore made for you in the blood of your merciful SAVIOUR? These are the inquiries virtually addressed to a very large number of this congregation by the announcement that a day is appointed on which the young, and others who are duly prepared, may be presented for Confirmation. Them it will be my duty especially to examine and to instruct towards this end. But neither was it fitting that the opportunity should be omitted of calling the serious attention of others to the different degrees in which they too are interested in this event. It is an occurrence, indeed, which cannot be viewed with indifference by any faithful member of the congregation; for if true Christians, we must feel that we are all concerned in the spiritual welfare each of the other as bound together in a holy brotherhood in CHRIST JESUS our LORD."







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# CONFIRMATION

AND

## FIRST COMMUNION.

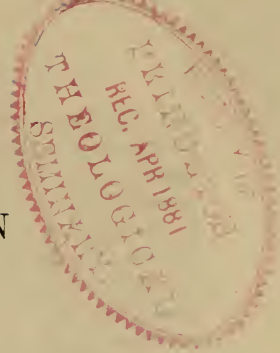
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### ON CONFIRMATION.

AMBASSADORS OF CHRIST AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD. It is thus that S. Paul defines the office and character of the Clergy; and therefore it is in proportion as we are or are not able to realise this definition, and to present it to the minds of our people, that we hold our influence over them as the Ministers of CHRIST'S Church, or as the Ministers of a State Establishment.

Now, whether it be from our own ignorance, or from negligence, or from accidents in our temporal position over which we have no control, or from the combined result of all these causes, the fact is, that in almost all our intercourse with our people, this definition is practically lost sight of; if we have any influence over their minds, it is in our own individual character, not in our office of Ambassadors, that we possess it: we may owe it to our learning, to our benevolence, to our comparative wealth, to our position in society, to our personal talent in preaching, but we do not owe it to the simple fact that we are representatives of Him Who saves, and that we are entrusted by Him with the means of salvation.

This fact people are unable to realise. Once, indeed, they did, but the idea is in a great measure lost,—not by



any sudden revolution, not by any process of reasoning, not by any definite conviction, but by the mere force of habit. The commissioned Minister of CHRIST ceased gradually to present himself before the eyes of the people in his character of Ambassador; gradually therefore did the idea fade from their minds,—slowly it faded, but it did fade. Their conception of the character had been produced, not by inductions of reasoning, which they were incapable of appreciating,—not by the words of the Bible, which they might or might not comprehend,—but by the facts before their eyes. Their parish Priest once felt as one having authority, and taught as one having authority. They also felt it; they did not reason about it—that most of them were incapable of doing—but took it for granted, and therefore could not regard him as one of the Scribes. Of the Apostolic Succession in so many words they probably had not even heard, but so long as the Priest comported himself among them as if he himself felt that he was unquestionably and undeniably the Steward of God's Mysteries, that is to say, the authorised dispenser of His means of grace; the unreasoning many received him as such, while the reasoning few would hail the Apostolical definition, when they met with it in the Bible, not as a new light to which, for the first time, they were to accustom their eyes, but as a simple and satisfactory confirmation of an idea already preconceived.

The doctrine was and is the true doctrine of the Bible. Rubrical niceties were the means by which that doctrine was presented to the minds of the vulgar; and therefore, when these niceties were neglected, the doctrine itself, though in reality unchanged, in practice became unfamiliar, obsolete, and forgotten.

For instance, it might or might not have been of importance, in any one given instance, that the people should do as they were directed by the Prayer Book—should present themselves to their parish Priest before receiving the Holy Communion, in order that he might determine whether they were or were not in a fit state to receive it; but when habitually they ceased to do so, and he still continued to admit them to the LORD's Table

indiscriminately, they lost first the idea that he was really the dispenser of the means of grace, and secondly that those were means of grace which he dispensed. The fact remained the same. Then, as formerly, it was the true Word of God, but the people had ceased to realise it as a fact, because they had ceased to see it.

Still, an idea like this, based on truth and supported by habit and association, is not lost at once ; it requires time, years, generations perhaps, to divest the mind of it. Thanks be to God, it is not entirely lost yet ; its outlines remain, though they are but faint and indistinct. But as no part of it was lost by any assertion or process of reasoning, so it is not by any assertion or process of reasoning that it can be restored. It required years to lose it ; it will require years to regain it. We must seek again the humble means which we have despised—we must treasure up the few fragments of Divine authority that still remain to us, and upon them we must build again the dilapidated edifice of CHRIST'S Church. Sufficient for us it is that we do our duty ; we cannot expect to see the results—we cannot hope, in the few years of our lives, to restore the decay of centuries. Our reward here will be the consciousness of having done our duty : others may reap the fruits ; sufficient for us that the LORD shows His servants their work, we may leave our children to see His glory.

It is upon these grounds that, in the present times, the office of Confirmation is peculiarly valuable,—valuable, I mean, beyond its own value as a means of grace, for it is one of the few points in our office in which we have not entirely thrown aside the indications of the priestly character,—one of the few instances in which tradition is in our favour,—one of the few fragments on which we may rebuild. It may seem a thing strange and unfamiliar to the minds of our people, that we require them to resort to us in their spiritual difficulties with respect to the LORD'S Supper,—that we ask them to “open their grief,”—that we offer them “the benefits of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice to the quieting of their conscience ;” but it is neither strange, nor un-



usual, nor repugnant to their feelings and habits, that we require the young to attend upon our ministry, that we examine them carefully and at large on their faith and their duty, that we correct and reprove their falling away in both particulars, and then, having subjected them to a definite and steady and lengthened course of preparation, that we either present them personally to the Bishop to receive the grace of Confirmation, or declare, in virtue of the office committed to us at our ordination, that we consider them unfit recipients of heavenly power. Here, then, is a beginning—here is a *locus standi*—here is at least one legitimate exercise of our office not entirely neglected by ourselves, and not entirely forgotten and repudiated by our people: and if we lose this hold upon them—nay, if we do not improve upon it—if we suffer the legitimate influence over the consciences of each individual so admitted and so acquired to die away—the blame will rest not with our predecessors, but with ourselves.

But, besides being the means for establishing a hold upon the consciences of the catechumens, this system of preparation may easily be made a step towards improving the Church's influence over those of others.

This may not be done, and cannot be done effectually by any plan or system of our own devising, because it is not our own influence as individuals that we are called upon to establish or confirm, but that of the Church; it is therefore her plans and her system that we must work with, and the work must be carried on by the tools she puts into our hands.

A conscientious clergyman, receiving notice of a confirmation from the Bishop, will contemplate, with something like dismay, the work that lies before him; he reflects that he has at least some seventy or eighty young men and young women to prepare, most of whom have left school at so very early an age, that the whole work of education must well nigh be begun afresh; he knows that, besides his legitimate duty as priest of preparing their consciences, it will be necessary that he discharge also the office of schoolmaster in enlightening their

minds and understandings; all this he has generally to do alone and unaided.

But why should he work alone? Has not the Church herself appointed him fellow workers in these duties? Who was it whom he himself once charged solemnly to remember, that forasmuch as these very catechumens now coming for Confirmation had promised "by them their sureties, to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, it was their parts and duties"—that is to say, the parts and duties of the sureties, not of the baptizing Priest—"to see that these children be taught, so soon as they shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession they then made by them." And how were they to do it? By calling upon them to "hear sermons;" by providing that they should "learn the Creed, the LORD's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health"—and not only this, but they were to watch over their conduct, their morals, and behaviour—they were to see that they are virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life. We complain day after day in our sermons, that the duties of godfathers and godmothers are neglected and forgotten; that men and women stand up in the Church Sunday after Sunday, and take upon themselves, before God and the congregation, the most momentous of duties, that of guiding baptized souls to eternity, and that they do it without the smallest idea of performing what they promise. Whose fault is this? Do we seek them out? do we call upon them to perform the duties they have undertaken? do we urge them day by day to help the education, to watch over the morals of those they have promised to guide, to be a comfort and aid to the parents? nay, for our own parts, (with all this work before us,) do we once turn our thoughts to these godfathers and godmothers, and call upon them now to fulfil the vow and promise which they made? If we do not, we have not fulfilled our duties to the godfathers and godmothers themselves, how then can we complain that they have not fulfilled theirs towards their charges?



The Church has not forgotten this ; the Church directs that so soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say in their mother tongue the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and can also answer the other questions of the Catechism, they shall be brought to the Bishop, and every one shall have a godfather or godmother as witness of their Confirmation. How many of us have availed ourselves of this? How many of us have ever even asked our catechumens who were their godfathers and godmothers? whether they were still alive? whether they resided in the parish? and in case they did not, or were not forthcoming, how many of us have thought of searching out some discreet and pious communicant among our own parishioners, and requesting him or her to undertake the office of godfather or godmother, to superintend the preparation of the catechumen in morals, as well as in instruction, and to be a witness of the Confirmation? If we have not done this, then we have not availed ourselves of the means still in our power. We have not earned a right to complain of our predecessors' negligence and disregard of Church ordinances, till our consciences stand fully absolved from a neglect and a disregard peculiarly our own.<sup>1</sup>

What is the use of this? In most cases are not godfathers and godmothers fully as ignorant of the doctrines of salvation as the catechumens they are undertaking to instruct? Yes, fully, more so—in these days of schools and parochial education far more so—but what then? In the first place, what right have we, sworn servants of the Church, to ask what is the use of this or that ordinance which, in accepting her orders, we have engaged to perform? What right have we to carry out, or neglect, according to our own private judgment of its utility, that which is ordered by the Church?

<sup>1</sup> Anciently the Confirmation sponsors might not be the same as the Baptismal, probably because when Confirmation followed closely upon Baptism, as must have been the case with adults, the one set of sponsors were required as a check upon the other, but no such rule exists in the English Church now, and therefore there is no reason why the baptismal sponsor should not be encouraged to extend his supervision until he present his catechumen to the Bishop for Confirmation.

But, in the second place, it has its use ; every ordinance of the Church has its use, if fully and faithfully carried out, and adapted with discretion to the needs of the case—we mutilate, we misapply them, in our untrained ignorance we render them useless, and then reject them because they are but what we ourselves have made them. Is learning, is knowing our duty the only or even the principal part of our catechumen's preparation? Do we not mistake theory for practice, mind for soul, understanding for conscience, knowledge for duty? Our SAVIOUR's words are not—"Happy are ye if ye know these things"—but "if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." It is not therefore a learned godfather or godmother that we want, but a conscientious one; not one who will explain the articles of faith—that we can do ourselves—but one who will do what we cannot, who will see them carried daily and hourly into practice. We often hear complaints about the disorders which take place at confirmations, when so many young people meet together; would it not be as well for us to reflect that, had all these young persons been provided, as the Church directs, with a godfather or godmother as a witness to their confirmation, few or none of these disorders could have taken place?

So soon therefore as we hear of a confirmation, our duty is to seek out first the godfathers and godmothers of our catechumens, to inquire of them the character which their charges have borne, since the time they left the parish school, and were, to a certain extent, removed from our immediate inspection, their general behaviour, the character they bear now, and their peculiar habits and dispositions.

Having selected witnesses, it then becomes the Parson's duty to lay down for their use, simple rules for the preparation of their charge's conscience; to point out and explain a certain course of prayers, psalms, and hymns, which he may think necessary; to mark in the catechumen's own Bible that particular course of reading which he may think applicable generally to the office of confirmation, and particularly to the special character and

disposition of the catechumen himself, and to note that course in his own note-book under the catechumen's name.<sup>1</sup>

The witness must then be asked when and at what times it will be convenient for him to bring his charge to the Parson's house, or to such place as the Parson may appoint for individual conferences; not that it will be necessary, or even advisable, that he should attend every time. In many cases, and more especially in those of young men, the presence of a third person would prove a check upon the confidential communications between the parson and his catechumen; still he should attend occasionally, in order that he may receive his own directions from time to time for the better guidance of his charge. He should be permitted also, and encouraged to attend the class lectures, and, of course, the general lectures and sermons in the church. This would obviate many an inconvenience, not to say impropriety, in the case of females who are not able to leave their daily work till after night-fall.

Neither is it of any material consequence that the witness be unlearned and unable to instruct—that is not his business—the Parson and his Curate will be able to do that, both at the class lectures and at the private conferences. His business is to superintend, to see that the Parson's instructions be carried out, and above all, to take diligent care lest the course of grace be checked, and the Divine blessing rendered ineffectual by any levity, heedlessness, or sin on the part of the catechumen. He will, of course, from time to time, make his report to the Parson, to whom it will be an excellent guide in his

<sup>1</sup> And here let it be observed, that though for certain reasons connected with the symbolism of the rite, the Church does not permit the sponsorship of the father or mother in the office of Baptism, in that of Confirmation this prohibition by no means holds good—in one sense of the expression the parents are the natural sponsors of the child. At their marriage they enter into a sort of covenant, that if God should give them children, and prolong their days, they will see those children christianly and virtuously brought up—they, as well as the godparents, then are entrusted in the undertaking, and may, equally with them, be called upon to witness the completion of their work.

subsequent counsels. Should the witness himself have forgotten the Articles of his faith, or the requirements of his duty, the office which he has undertaken will recal them to his mind. Should he never have learned them he may learn them now. It is notorious that a school monitor learns more by teaching than by studying himself; and, at all events, he will be more firmly attached than ever to the Church in whose work he has himself assisted.

But we have a duty to perform before we have the announcement of a Confirmation; we have a duty which ought never to cease—that of keeping up between ourselves and our catechumens the relations which we have established with them at school; we are jealous, and rightly so, about foreign interference with the education of our people; we claim it, and justly claim it, as an office especially entrusted by CHRIST to the stewards of His mysteries, but we should remember, that in all classes, and in the lower classes especially, school is but the beginning of education. Church education, in the proper sense of the term, is the preparing of baptized Christians for that state of life to which God has called them. The education of the labourer therefore must necessarily be carried on in the fields as well as the school-room, and it is unavoidable, except in particular cases, that our children leave our school, and our immediate superintendence, at the age of twelve or thirteen at the latest. Practically, however, our superintendence ceases much earlier than that. Taking one school with another, and taking the average time of attendance, two years and nine months is the length of a child's education; and as the average of children enter school at the age of six or seven, at the age of nine or ten their school time ceases; in fact, a labourer's child completes his education (using the term in its popular sense) at the time when a child from the higher classes begins his.

If, therefore, nothing beyond the parish school is done towards building up the faith of our catechumens, and upon their faith training them in the paths of their duty, it is a fiction to say that the education of the country is



in the hands of the Church. It is in vain to imagine that instruction, however sound or good, can hold its impress on minds so unformed, built up though they may be upon the sure Word of God, and in connexion with the true teaching of the Church. It is, no doubt, as Mr. Tinling observes, "the seed of great things cast into the ground:" but if this is all that can be done for it, it can hardly fail to be choked by the thorns and briars of the world, nor can it reasonably be expected to bring its fruit to perfection. We will not doubt but that it may, and by God's blessing often does, shoot forth in after days, and bear its fruit to life eternal, but in this after growth the Church has little or no hand; it is the almost spontaneous fruit of baptismal grace, for it has been deprived of the training of the Church at the very time when the training of the Church was most necessary for it.

What notion of the Church's distinctive doctrines is it possible to give to a child of ten years old? what ideas on the sin of schism, on the mysteries of the Sacraments? on the unseen grace of ordination and apostolic succession? what distinction can there be in his mind between the Church and the meeting-house, between the Parson of the parish and the schismatic preacher, beyond the mere charm of childish associations?

And does not this account entirely for the peculiar character of English dissent in the nineteenth century? It is not bigoted; it is not fanatical; there is no zeal, no energy about it; it is as different from the stern determination of the Scotch covenanters, and the wild, yet earnest fanaticism of the English independents, as one thing can be from another. It is the dissent of Indifference. A man wanders from church to chapel, from chapel to meeting-house, and back again to church, without cause or object, without one distinct idea of doctrine, or one definite reason. He leaves the Church because he likes the meeting-house better; he deserts the ambassador of CHRIST, the steward of the means of his salvation, and follows for the time some teacher of his own selection, for no better reason than convenience or private pique, or personal friendship. And where does

the fault lie? Surely in the Church, which has been satisfied with the teaching of the parish school, which has never given her children a hold or stay for their faith, and has allowed them to grow up under her eye, tossed about by every wave of conflicting doctrines. It is the fault of the Church—not, indeed, exclusively of the Clergy—for “all fathers, mothers, masters, and dames, are bound to cause their children, servants, and apprentices, to come to the Church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear and to be ordered by the Curate, until such times as they have learned all that is here appointed for them to learn; that is to say, not the words of the Catechism only, but the doctrines of the Catechism, the summary of the Christian religion, and of the Church’s teaching. The whole English Church is in fault in this matter, laity as well as clergy, but the blame lies heaviest on us, who, being ministers and officers of the Church, do not, day after day, press her requirements on the ears of her careless and disobedient children.

In this case, as in the last, the root of the error lies in our own neglect of the Church’s ordinances. She provides ample means to meet this emergency, and to bring her children to Confirmation as Christians and as Churchmen. We, her sworn servants, exercise our private judgment, and, because we do not happen to see the peculiar fitness of her injunctions, have allowed them to become forgotten and obsolete. We are unable now to restore it, because such restoration requires the co-operation of our laity, and we cannot at once impress their minds with its importance. We have ourselves produced our own difficulties, and we may lament, but why should we wonder at the effects of what we ourselves have caused?

It is, however, idle, and worse than idle, to indulge in regrets for a state of things passed away; our duty is, not to regret, but to restore, and till we are able to do this fully and completely, our duty is to do our utmost to avail ourselves of the means still in our hands. Much may be done to interest even the farmer, and the tradesman in the schools. There is no reason why we are to confine our attention to those appropriated exclusively to

the working classes, nor why the middle school should be denied our superintendence. In truth the class of farmers and tradesmen have just grounds to be jealous ; their interests are neglected in the daily ministration. We must labour, therefore, to remove that jealousy.

Avarice, as well as jealousy, is a passion belonging to human nature,—it is difficult to remove it in any case, but more especially difficult where we by long neglect have permitted custom to confirm and render habitual a dereliction of duty. No doubt the farmer, by employing children, and abandoning them when they grow up to habits of idleness, is not only endangering the souls of our catechumens, but is ruining his own succession of labourers. Still we can hardly expect farmers to be so long-sighted and conscientious as to give a shilling for that which they imagine they can get for sixpence. But there is no reason why we may not ask them to apply to our school-masters for their working children, to be sent to them in parties, and for a limited time, according to a fixed roster, to be returned to the school, and relieved by other parties of children, whose turn it is to do the field work, and thus to render our school what is called an industrial school.

In this manner we may retain our catechumens for a much longer period under our own inspection, and shorten—perhaps do away with entirely—their period of compulsory idleness. The parents will have no wish to remove them, and the employers will, by degrees, be brought to work with us instead of against.

By such methods as these, we may hope ultimately to restore our lost influence not only over our catechumens, but over their employers and their parents. This, however, is a work of time and patience. Let us examine the means which at this present moment lie ready to our use. There are the evening and Sunday schools. I speak of these as means already in our hands, not that they are generally perfect, not that they do not in most instances require arrangement and adaptation before they can be made available, but because both the name, and the thing itself, is familiar to our people, and, in



modifying them to our purposes, we have no prejudices to contend against.

With respect to the Sunday-school, one great and fatal mistake arises from our making no distinction between a Sunday and a weekday school. A weekday school is work, and it is wholesome that it should be considered in that light by the children. The Sunday-school is enjoyment. To the one they should go because it is their duty, to the other, because it is their pleasure. Our object in the two cases is different, our treatment should be different also. In both cases, no doubt, we have to teach them their duty; but their principal duty on the LORD's day is not so much to go to the House of the LORD, as to be "*glad*" when we say unto them, Let us go into the House of the LORD." To school at nine, to church at eleven, to school again at half-past one, to church at three, with possibly more school, and more church in the evening, is to desecrate the LORD's day in the minds of the children, by associating it with the hardest and most disagreeable work they have to do in the whole week. We may teach them thereby the Creed, the LORD's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, but not to love God, nor to seek God, nor to do His will on earth as it is done in heaven.

There should be no morning school on Sundays, and, in the summer at least, no evening school. School-time should be for the most part confined within the limits specified by the Canon, between the morning and afternoon services. In the morning those who have been labouring all the week have quite enough to do to rest and prepare themselves for church; in the evening, the whole of the labouring class, the children especially, are far better employed in their own relaxations. But between the services, there is one hour and a half clear, which may very profitably be employed, in keeping up in the minds of our catechumens a sense of their responsibilities. The Sunday class should be as different as we can make it from a school, and we should carefully guard against any possibility of its being used as a substitute for it. No child should be admitted into it under the

age of twelve at the very lowest: reading-books, copy-books, and slates—all the paraphernalia of a school—should be carefully put away: those portions of Scripture which it is necessary to read should be read as a privilege by the best and most distinct readers, so that by no possibility the Sunday class could be degraded into a reading lesson.

But though the reading of passages of Scripture may at times be necessary, generally speaking, instruction should be conveyed by word of mouth, and should be made as attractive and entertaining as possible. The conversational and catechetical form should be freely used; the catechumens should be encouraged to express their own opinions, and to take an active part in the business, so that they may be led to seek their class as a pleasure, rather than be driven to it as a duty. If the latter be the only moving power, we shall soon lose our hold over them, and they will drop away, one by one, just at the very age when it is most necessary to retain them.

If we can possibly command an adequate supply of Sunday teaching, the classes should never be large—eight or ten will be as many as an ordinary teacher will generally manage to interest; wherever the class greatly exceeds that number, we are very likely to find some of the party inattentive and listless. And, in truth, Sunday-school teaching is a work to which the laity take very kindly; it is one, too, in which they should always meet with encouragement from the parson, for there are few occupations which tend to keep alive a sound catholic feeling in a parish more completely than the reciprocities of Sunday teaching.

The Sundays themselves should be made to point out the general course of instruction, for while their Epistles and Gospels, taken as a whole, form a complete course of theology, their collects are as complete a system of prayer adapted to every part of it. Such an arrangement will produce uniformity among the different teachers, and will enable the parson to unite the classes occasionally for a general lecture, or when he

may think fit, to visit and inspect them; but, having arranged their general course, he will do well to leave the details to be worked out by the individual teachers independently, without impairing their interest by regulations unnecessarily strict and unbending.

The Sunday-school, though it may to a certain degree be made available for both sexes, will generally be found more convenient for girls, whom, for obvious reasons, it would be unadvisable to admit in the evening school which is held on the week-days: this last, on the other hand, is much better adapted to the needs of apprentices and farmers' boys.

It is useless to attempt this description of school in the summer. While the evenings are light, and the weather fine, young men and boys are quite as well employed elsewhere: there is extra work on the farms, by which a few shillings may be earned, and home-work in their gardens, and even the cricket-ground, which, in its way, is quite as useful as the school. But in the winter the evening-school is as great a blessing as can be accorded to a parish; few young men seek the public-house from vice; they seek it for warmth, for company, to relieve themselves from the wearisomeness of a long dark evening. Anything therefore which gives them occupation is in itself a blessing. Such a school as this must, however, be necessarily self-supporting, or nearly so; few parish priests of the present day have sufficient influence over the young men of their flocks to be able to admit them to an evening school gratuitously. If the scholars do not feel that they are exercising some degree of self-denial in paying for their schooling,—if they are not fully sensible that they must get their money's worth for their money, the teacher will find it very difficult indeed either to keep up their attention or to secure their regular attendance.

If in the Sunday-school the teaching is mostly oral, and entirely of a religious character, in this it should be school-like, formal, and mostly secular. The writing-book and the summing-slate are in their proper place here; the young men are induced to come in the first

instance in order that they may what they call improve their learning; they should have what they come for; the half-hour's instruction on religious matters, with which the parson himself may conclude the sitting, will, if properly employed, be found quite sufficient for the purpose on ordinary occasions, and for special cases a class of boys or young men may easily be added to the Sunday-school.

There is some difficulty about providing teachers for this description of school. It is not the province of the parson nor of the curate to teach in it; its secular constitution and the necessity of exacting payment forbids this; the parson's business is to superintend, direct, and visit, taking only to himself that small portion of the teaching which may be considered as a direct preparation for Confirmation; if he exceeds this, he impairs his own influence. Neither is it the province of the national schoolmaster: on no consideration should he be permitted to undertake it. "I confess," says Moseley, "that it has always appeared to me unreasonable to require of the schoolmaster this labour. I believe, that in the majority of cases it would be prejudicial to his health, and that in all it would seriously impair his usefulness in the school; that is to say, his own school." The utmost that ought to be required of the schoolmaster is, that he should take his turn with the parson and curate in visiting and inspecting. This difficulty of finding schoolmasters arises in a great measure from our own neglect in availing ourselves of the means which the Church places in our hands. In most parishes there is a small salary allotted to the maintenance of a clerk or sexton, or both, and in most parishes these two officers are very useless individuals, so far as their own offices are concerned; the latter especially, whose duties are so invariably merged in the office of gravedigger, that few people ever think of him in the light of a sacristan at all. Why are not these persons to be associated in the parochial college as teachers? The proper office of the clerk is that of precentor. As there are few young men who may not be interested and drawn toge-



ther by music, a portion of the evening school-time may very properly be set apart for it, and the clerk, if chosen with judgment, might easily be made the musical teacher. So also the sexton, whose duties in the vestry, as sacristan, are now very light, might, if selected according to his qualifications, hold in connection with his office that of evening schoolmaster ; and the parochial salaries of both these officials, thus eked out by the payments of the scholars, and perhaps added to by some little contribution from the parson and his richer parishioners, would in most cases be sufficient to procure the services of competent persons.<sup>1</sup>

This expedient appears to offer a means which, if judiciously employed, would not only promote morality and religion, and diffuse knowledge and intelligence among the labouring classes, but would attach them more closely to the Church, by whose officers and under whose discipline they are conducted from childhood to maturity—from Baptism to Confirmation.

These are some of the obstacles which surround a priest preparing his flock for Confirmation, and these are some of the means by which these obstacles may be met, and in many cases overcome. But we must not forget that they are, after all, only preparatory measures—only methods for retaining the Church's influence over the younger part of our flock during the time which must necessarily elapse between leaving school and receiving the grace of Confirmation. They by no means supersede the necessity of a special preparation when the announcement of the rite has been made by the Bishop. It must never be forgotten that the preparation necessary to a right reception of it is one of conscience as well as one of intellect. The most perfect arrangement of Sunday and evening schools will in no way

<sup>1</sup> In schools where apprenticed teachers are allowed by Government these may be employed in this manner very beneficially to themselves as well as to others. In such cases the parson will do well not to be too fussy and interfering ; it is a good thing to give a young man an idea of "his own school,"—his own private institution—and if he cannot be trusted to do that when in his fourth or fifth year he ought never to have been selected for a pupil teacher at all.

diminish the labour of the parson during that period ; what it will do is, enable him to discharge the duties which will then devolve upon him with greater profit to his catechumens, and greater satisfaction to himself.

And at this point new difficulties, fresh obstacles beset him ; but these are of a different kind from any which we have been hitherto considering, for as the former proceed generally from his parishioners, these are occasioned mostly by his Diocesan.

Bishops select invariably the summer months for holding their Confirmations, and as invariably interfere with either haying, or barking, or corn-harvest, or hopping, or fruit-picking, some one or other of the necessary and periodical labours of rural life. This will not affect every catechumen alike, for in all cases, some are more and some are less engaged in these labours ; nor will it affect every parish alike, one or other of these harvests will always take precedence of the rest in importance, according as the parish is pastoral, or agricultural, or woodland, or situated in a hop or cider country ; still in almost every rural parish some portion of the catechumens are so employed throughout the summer, and, so far as that portion is concerned, preparation to any useful purpose is morally, if not physically, impossible. The harvest, of whatever kind it is, comes on, the work cannot be delayed to meet the convenience of the Bishop, the corn is ripe, it must be reaped and housed, the sap is up, the tree must be cut and barked, the weather is fine, the hay must be made—in nine cases out of ten the labourer, and this includes the farmer's sons as well as his servants, exhausted with his day's work, returns late, eats his supper, and throws himself on his bed to recruit mind and body for the labours of another day—and in the tenth instance, where zeal, and religion, and a sense of duty prevail over natural infirmity, he comes to the Parson willing but weary, ready in mind but exhausted in body, keeping himself awake only by an effort, and totally unable to fix his thoughts on anything whatever.

Of course the reason why summer is selected as the



time of Confirmation, arises from the simple fact, that that season is better suited for travelling; nor is this to be attributed entirely to inconsiderateness on the part of the Bishop; the actual day of Confirmation, which is all that the Bishop sees or knows of the matter, had far better be a summer's day—rain, and wind, and snow, interfere very materially with its arrangements, and what is of far more importance, in a moral point of view, daylight is necessary for the safe return of the inhabitants of those parishes which are distant from the Church in which the Confirmation is held. The Bishop judges from what he sees, he cannot judge from what he neither knows nor understands, nor has had any experience about, and few Bishops can understand, few ever hear of even the difficulties which beset a parish Priest in preparing his flock for Confirmation. As there is no season so appropriate for Confirmation as Lent, so there is no season so convenient. There is no harvest of any consequence to interfere with it, and the lengthening days give facilities for evening examinations which are not to be met with at an earlier season of the year.

Selected as they mostly are from the universities or from the public schools, few Bishops have any experience in parish matters, and to this probably is attributable a clause that is generally appended to every episcopal announcement of Confirmation, and which, if it were acted upon, which it very seldom is, would form as great a difficulty as any which a parish Priest can have to encounter.

This is a clause laying down definitely the age of the catechumens, that are to be admitted to Confirmation. Now no man who has ever had the care of a parish, and has turned his thoughts practically to the subject, can possibly be unaware that there is no rule whatever to be laid down on the subject, that there are no two cases precisely alike with respect to conscience, intellect, education, circumstances, family connections; and above all, future prospects. There is nothing that requires more thought, more time, more inquiries, and more consideration, than fixing the age when the Parson shall advise any particular member of his flock to apply for the confirm-

ing grace ; how many cases are there in every Confirmation where he will not take upon himself to determine at all without a consultation with the parents or friends ? how many catechumens will he have whom he knows ought to be confirmed at the age of twelve ? and how many more ought not to be confirmed at twenty ?

The principle of Confirmation is this :—God, having regenerated and adopted His children, gives them visible guardians, parents, relations, godfathers and godmothers to protect and defend their childhood. When they draw towards maturity, and are called upon to go forth to fight the battle of life, to encounter the dangers and temptations of the world, these visible guardians are, for the most part, withdrawn from them by death or distance ; or, if not withdrawn, their influence is diminished ; that period, therefore, whenever it occurs, is the time when they must seek their strength from God. Of course, therefore, that period must be different in different circumstances. Orphans, for instance, should be confirmed on losing their parents, be their age what it may—God, Who has taken away their visible guardians, must be called upon to be their immediate guardian Himself. But then there occurs another difficulty, the grace of Confirmation, like all other sacramental graces, is beneficial or injurious, according to the state of mind in which it is received. Ignorance is no bar to its beneficial reception, unless that ignorance is wilful—but the consciousness of sin is—and every individual case has to be sifted and inquired into, lest over-confidence should turn the grace of God into a curse, or over-diffidence prevent the reception of it. Here, therefore, are two variable elements—it is impossible to say beforehand at what particular age a given individual will be launched into the dangers and temptations of the world ; and it is equally impossible to define that at such a particular time his conscience will be in a fit state for the reception of divine grace. The task of determining this is not an easy one even for the Parson residing on the spot, knowing the individual personally, and having all the circumstances before him ; yet this task a Bishop, who has neither seen, known, nor heard of

the individual in question, will take confidently upon himself, and decide upon, and will say *ex cathedrâ*, no one under such an age shall be confirmed at all. To quote the words of one, who, as a parish Priest, has few equals in England: "The Bishop has omitted his own duty in consulting the parish Priest as to the exigencies of his parish: he resents as an insult any remonstrance; his mandate has been issued, and it is irrevocable; and the poor presbyter consults with his weaker brother as to the precise meaning to be attached to the injunction of the Church. 'Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, *so soon as he can say* the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.' 'All these things can be done by my poor child,' says the weaker brother, 'why should he be deprived of his privileges?' The presbyter can only answer by recommending to him in private the doctrine of passive obedience; a doctrine which he could not assert in public without exposing himself to the censure of the Bishop. Surely our Bishops, who are bound to consult their presbyters, may at least have such confidence in their judgments as to permit them to decide on such a subject for themselves."<sup>1</sup>

During the Confirmation held by the Bishop of Chester, in the year 1851, his Chaplain kept an account of the numbers confirmed in all the different parishes, distinguishing the sexes, and was totally unable to account for the fact, that in the country parishes the number of males exceeded considerably the number of females, while in the towns, the proportions were invariably reversed. The fact may easily be accounted for, but in a way which shows how very inadequately the present system of Confirmation fulfils the purposes for which that rite was instituted by the Apostles. In country parishes most parents endeavour to send their girls to service at the earliest possible age; many of them find situations even before they attain their thirteenth or fourteenth year; but as the families requiring servants, and more especially

<sup>1</sup> Presbyterian Rights.

that description of servants, reside mostly in towns, these girls must necessarily leave their friends, connexions, minister, all who have hitherto guided and protected them, at the age when they are most liable to temptations, and thus they enter into life in a situation more than any other exposed to them, that of girl of all work, in a humble family living in the outskirts of a large town. If one individual more than another requires the special aid of God's protecting hand, it is a girl placed in such a situation as this, and she is the person especially deprived of this grace, because she has not reached the Bishop's specified age. It may be said that the masters and mistresses may be considered the guardians of this servant, and thus may stand in the place of parents. Thankful ought we to be that this is frequently the case; but even under these favourable circumstances, which are the exceptions rather than the rule, these strangers are precisely the catechumens which their new Priest must needs find the greatest difficulty in giving a satisfactory account of—they are strangers to him, he knows nothing of their dispositions, or family connexions—he is a stranger to them, and they are invariably shy and backward with him. They have no confidence in him, they can have none, they have never conversed with him as children, they have never seen him except in church, it is seldom too that they can be spared, even by conscientious families, in many they will not be spared at all; the town Parson, already overwhelmed with the work which properly belongs to him, has these in addition thrown upon his hands—it is impossible that he can have time to attend to them, he knows that it will take twice as long to prepare them, as it would any of his own particular flock, because he must first become acquainted with them, and the inevitable consequence is, that he does not attempt it, that he asks a few questions, gives a few exhortations, signs their ticket for admission, and then sees his catechumens no more. But this is not the worst: deprived by their Bishop's regulations of the strengthening grace of God, they have in many cases already yielded to the temptations that beset them; their characters are far deteriorated



from what they were when they left their own homes and their own parish Priest, and the heavenly Visitant finds hearts which once were ready for His reception, but have now ceased to be so. The Priest, an utter stranger, has neither time nor opportunity for detecting this, and pointing out the only method of again preparing to receive Him, that is to say, an immediate and sincere course of penitence. The pass ticket is lightly given, the Bishop's hands are laid upon the head, the Divine blessing is received in a heart utterly unprepared for it, and the blessing is turned into a curse.

Where lies the fault? In the Bishop, who, in the first place, holds his Confirmations triennially, taking the minimum allowed as his maximum, and having done so, limits the reception of the Divine blessing to a particular age.

The remedy to this is simple. The responsibility belongs to the Bishop, and on the Bishop's shoulders it should be thrown. He has a full right, if he so pleases, to investigate any particular case presented to him by the Parson of the parish, and (if he think fit) to reverse his decision; but, if he does so, he assumes the whole of the responsibility himself. The parish Priest, therefore, who has any respect for his own conscience, will utterly disregard all general and sweeping directions which his superior has no right to give; he will judge each case himself on its own merits, taking notes of what he has done, and his reasons for doing it: he will present those catechumens whom he has selected, as, to the best of his judgment, fit recipients of Divine grace. Should the Bishop think fit to reject them, the Parson will state his reasons in writing. Should the Bishop still maintain his objection, the Parson's conscience will be clear, and the responsibility will rest where it ought. There is a right of decision in the Bishop as well as the power, for the Parish Priest may have erred in his estimate of fitness, but a responsibility there is also. What the amount of the responsibility may be, should the catechumen so presented be then fit, and afterwards, by reason of not possessing that Divine strength which the Church has

always considered necessary, should fall away into sin and be lost, the Bishop may form some idea, when he reflects on the not unsimilar case of a child dying unbaptized by reason of the parish Priest neglecting or refusing baptism.<sup>1</sup>

There are two mistakes into which clergymen are very liable to fall in preparing their catechumens for Confirmation: one is, the treating the subject exclusively as a preparation of the intellect; the other, which naturally results from this, is the fixing upon some one approved rule or course of examination, and applying it to all characters alike—a preparation of the intellect no doubt it is, and in this sense one rule must be applied to all. It is necessary that all our catechumens equally understand fully the terms of the covenant in which they are placed, the conditions under which alone God has adopted them, and their own consequent responsibilities. It is necessary that they all see clearly what are their blessings, what are their hopes, how these hopes may be frustrated, how these blessings lost.

In a land so overrun with schism as ours is, it is ne-

<sup>1</sup> It is many years ago that my thoughts were directed to this by the following circumstance: Westbourne Rectory is a sinecure, and its Rector a sort of State Chaplain to the Bishop of Chichester. In that capacity I was attending Bishop Carr on one of his Confirmations. On entering the church, it was quite evident that the Bishop's injunction with respect to age had been entirely disregarded by one of the Incumbents, a grey-haired old man, who had about a year before been appointed to a parish notorious for its immorality and drunkenness: many of the children were not more than ten or twelve years old. The Bishop accordingly sent me to the Priest to ask why he had paid so little attention to his commands. "You will tell his lordship," said the old man, "that I have no hopes of doing any thing in my parish without GOD's grace, and his lordship knows its present state as well as I do. These younger catechumens belong to the worst families in the parish. I have no hopes of any guidance or example for them from their parents, who would only teach them what is wrong, and therefore I thought it the more necessary that they should be confirmed, in order that GOD should strengthen and direct them Himself. They can all say the Creed, the LORD's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the rest of the Catechism, and I do not know what the Church requires more."

The Bishop confirmed them all. Whether GOD did then and there strengthen them for the particular trials to which they were exposed, is more than I can say, but certain it is, that the parish in question does not possess now the evil reputation which it did ten years ago.



cessary also that they should all have a distinct knowledge of the articles of their faith, that it should be impressed upon their minds that the conditions of their covenant are broken, and their inheritance of heaven forfeited, just as much by breach of faith as by breach of duty: that if they who have received the sacrament of strength are required, in virtue of that strength, to walk in GOD's laws and to keep all His commandments to do them, so they who have received the sacrament of enlightening are required to stand by the faith that has been imparted to them, to hold fast the form of sound words that they have received. They should be shown that the penalty upon each is the same, because in both cases alike they break the covenant of their baptism, which requires faith as well as duty—that as “without holiness no man shall see the LORD,” so “he that believeth not shall be damned”—that as to the adopted child of GOD there belong peculiar duties incumbent upon him in that character, so to the member of CHRIST there exist peculiar articles of belief which constitute the Christian faith, and which, whatever be the rule of GOD to others, except a Christian “believe faithfully,” he at all events “cannot be saved.” This must be put to all, not theoretically, but practically; abstract principles are well enough, it may be, to us, but they are not so to our uneducated people—*seguis irritant animos demissa per aurem quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus*. It is not sufficient that we tell them that there is one baptism for the remission of sins; we must show them that they themselves are acting against it whenever they consort with baptists, who baptize afresh, or Calvinists, who promise justification by prevenient grace, or subsequent experience. It is not sufficient that we tell them that their Blessed SAVIOUR is Very GOD of Very GOD; we must show them that they are forfeiting their own salvation by consorting with Unitarians and Socinians, who deny it. It is not sufficient that we point out to them that they pray against schism as well as against false doctrine and heresy; we must show them what acts of schism are, and make them understand that whenever

they wander into this or that schismatic meeting-house, or place themselves under this or that unauthorised and self-commissioned teacher, they are then and there doing despite to their Redeemer, from Whom all Church unity proceeds—then and there giving up that particular faith into which they were baptized,—then and there denying the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, and forfeiting the inheritance which they hold only on condition of that faith and in connection with that Church.

These are not subjects for the pulpit. Whoever there makes any form of belief the subject of argument, whether it be Unitarian and Calvinistic, whether it be Presbyterian or Roman Catholic, commits an error; if that argument degenerate into railing, he commits a sin; the teaching there should be dogmatic, not argumentative—this is the Catholic Faith, without admitting the possibility of doubting it: thus I, the Ambassador of CHRIST, announce, without admitting that the shadow of doubt can exist on the authority of the message. “If any choose to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor the Churches of God”—if “Ephraim be gone to his idols, let him alone.” But the case is far different in private conversation, where the catechumen has the power of reply,—where the argument can be adapted to each particular case. There the fact of schism must be admitted and deplored, the sin pointed out, the peculiar doubt which may exist in the mind of the particular individual removed, for in this case it may be removed without suggesting it to the mind of another; railing in this as in all other cases must be avoided; there is no need of condemning others—the inference may, perhaps, be unavoidable, nor is there any reason why we should avoid it, but there must be no doubt left on his mind that, if he, a sworn servant of CHRIST, countenance such practices—much more if he partake in them—he individually forfeits his own salvation, and that, however God may be pleased to deal with others, unless he “believe,” and “faithfully” too—that is implicitly—“he cannot be saved.” It is at the approach to Confirmation especially that these peculiar points should be insisted

upon, because the very first preliminary to the reception of Divine strength in the catechumen is the open confession which he makes in the face of the whole Church of his inalienable reliance on the covenants of his Baptism, and his own firm determination to abide by them. He is not now what he was at Baptism—he is now a free agent, and fully able to understand what he professes, and it is our duty to see that he makes no profession without perfectly comprehending the extent of his liabilities,—that he shall not run heedlessly into the schismatic liberalism of the day without at least being warned of his danger, without being made fully aware that belief in the unity and catholicity of the Church into which he was baptized is one of the articles of his faith, that therefore, whatever the fashion of the world may say, he will, in going against it, have given up one of the articles of his covenant—one of the conditions on which he received the promise of salvation, and that, whether hereafter he be saved or not, at all events he is not saved by those baptismal covenants which he has broken.

If these points were more insisted upon, and made the conditions of Confirmation, we might have, perhaps, a few more fixed and conscientious schismatics than we have at present, though even that may be doubtful; but we should at least be relieved of those hosts of men, who, halting for ever between two opinions, wavering all their lives long between faith and schism, between the Church and the meeting-house, are in reality an incumbrance rather than a support, impeding and bringing discredit upon that Church of which they are the nominal members—adding to her numbers while they take from her strength.

For these reasons we must not omit to make our preparation a preparation of the intellect. Before coming to Confirmation, our catechumens must know distinctly what “the right faith” is, and in what particulars men depart from it.

But a far more important part of this preparation is that of the conscience. In order to bring this before our people in a practical form we should make our start-

ing point that direction in the Prayer Book, that, as a general rule, none are to be admitted to receive the Holy Communion who are not confirmed. We should speak of Confirmation to them not as a sacrament of the Gospel, not as that which is "generally necessary to salvation," but as a fitting and, in ordinary cases, necessary preparation to that which is.

If we take as the definition of a sacrament that given in the Catechism—a rite "generally necessary to salvation"—we might imagine that our people regard Confirmation as a Sacrament, and do not so regard the LORD's Supper. They certainly do not in so many words speak of Confirmation as one of the two sacraments of the Gospel, but in practice they seem to think so, for numbers will press to it, if permitted, who have not an idea of the necessity of receiving the Body and Blood of CHRIST at His Holy Table.

If this were an error of theory, it might be met by actual precept; but it is not. It would be useless for us to waste time in insisting on a point which our people do not doubt, that Confirmation is not of equal necessity with the two Gospel Sacraments, because in theory they hold all this. Their error is, that their theory is not carried out to its legitimate consequences. It must be met, then, by acting as if we ourselves took the theory for granted, by doing what men would do if they really thought so. We must not, therefore, talk to them of preparing for Confirmation, but of preparing for the Holy Communion. We must speak to them of the danger of receiving it unworthily, of the promises which we make on receiving that grace, on the performance of which depends the efficacy of the grace itself; of our natural inability to perform those promises; of the strength which we require from God to enable us to perform them; and of Confirmation as God's method of giving us that strength, without which the Bread of Life would be to us the savour of death.

In this manner we should habitually regard, and insensibly lead our people to regard, Confirmation as a step to the LORD's Supper, and the LORD's Supper as a

step to a holy life. You cannot tell them this, but you may show it to them, and lead them to receive it themselves as an admitted fact, though they may possibly never have heard it asserted in so many words.

The real examination, therefore, into which the Parson must enter with his catechumens on receiving notice of Confirmation is an examination of conscience. The Creed, the Commandments, and the Catechism, will be a necessary preliminary, because the conscience, before it can exert its proper function, and comprehend its own shortcomings, must needs be enlightened by a clear view of Christian faith and Christian duty. But this is merely the foundation; all his preparation of Sunday and evening schools, and public catechising, invaluable as they will be to him as helps and preliminaries, will in no way diminish the labours of that period—nay, will even increase them, because an enlightened conscience will always be a scrupulous conscience, and the more his catechumens have been accustomed to converse with him on such matters, the more desirous they will be to do so.

The Parson's manual now will be, not the Catechism—that will be his accessory and reference: his manual will be the exhortations of the Communion Service. He will show his catechumens that they are now about to enter on the wilderness of this world, which affords the traveller no spiritual food. He will point out to them how and where this spiritual food is provided. He will explain that this food, though necessary to sustain the strength, is capable of being turned into a means of destruction and death by the infirmities of the travellers. "As the benefit is great, if with a true heart and penitent and lively faith we receive that Holy Sacrament, so is the danger great if we receive the same unworthily;" and justly so, because on first entering into this wilderness, the means of strength are vouchsafed, because he who knows what he wants, and does not ask for what he wants, is justly left to the consequence of his own negligence or wilfulness. They must, therefore, by the experience of life which they have had already, ascertain wherein they have been deficient, and, in order to do this, they must



(to go back to the exhortation) "examine their lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments," (here comes in the Catechism and the preparation of the schools); and forasmuch as they are now rational and accountable beings, and, so far, different from what they were when they were baptized, fully capable now, if they please, to turn God's grace, whether of strength or nourishment, into weakness and destruction, they must take heed that there be not at this present moment an obstruction to the course of that grace in their own souls, and, therefore, "whereinsoever they shall have perceived themselves to have offended, either by will, word, or deed, there they must bewail their own sinfulness, and confess themselves to Almighty God with full purpose of amendment of life."

If this be the true course of preparation, it is perfectly obvious, that, though the Parson will anxiously avail himself of that opportunity to recall his parishioners generally to a sense of their baptismal responsibilities, though his sermons and his Church catechisings will turn on that point, though he will satisfy himself that his catechumens do understand what their duty is, and what their faith is, and though he will for that purpose divide them into little classes of four and six, according to their abilities, or their private friendships, or the interest they appear to take in each other, yet that for this, the main point of all his examinations, the ascertaining how each individual has applied the knowledge of God's will, which he individually possesses, and the help of God's grace, which has been vouchsafed to him personally, for this he must see and converse with every catechumen separately and singly.

This is why the Parson's work on such occasions is so laborious. It is a work that he can delegate to no other, not even to his curate, except partially. He may, and in most cases must, make previous inquiries as to the conduct and character of each individual from the masters, the parents, and the sponsors of each. For much of this his curate will be available, and ought to be so employed, for the purpose of training him to take charge



of a parish at some future time. The Parson should keep a general note-book, accessible to all his assistants, and a private note-book besides ; that private note-book no man but himself may see, and his application of that note-book to the cases of his individual catechumens no man may take part in.

For this, by far the most important part of a Parson's duty at this period, it is impossible to lay down special rules. The whole work consists in applying the different articles of the Christian faith to the different duties of the Christian practice ; but in each particular case the whole train of thought, argument, and teaching, may be essentially different from the case which has gone before it. In the pulpit, all the articles of the Christian faith must be brought forward in their turns, and insisted on equally. The suppression or undue exaltation of any one of them is in itself a heresy. Here, in one case, some articles may safely be kept in the background, and others insisted upon ; while in the next, the very same article, which before had been neglected apparently and forgotten, must now be brought into broad light. There is no point which requires more skill and experience in the catechist than the adaptation of the general teaching of Christianity to the peculiar condition of individual catechumens. The Parson has none but general rules to guide him. He must study the history of the times, the history of his country, the history of his parish, and the history of his catechumens separately. Every one of these circumstances will more or less cast a colouring over his teaching, and bring one or other of the articles of his faith into temporary prominence.

#### THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH.

There is no point which requires greater skill in the catechist than in his choice of subject, and his adaptation of it to the peculiar condition of those whom he is teaching.

The doctrines of the Christian religion are indeed arranged by the creed, and by the three great festivals of

the Church, into distinct groups, still there is no such thing as *the* leading article of the Faith. That which has been called *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ* has in fact no existence, for there is no prominence to be given to one article of the Christian faith over another, if all are necessary to salvation—that is to say, if without holding all of them the Christian cannot be saved: then all must be necessary alike, because the omission of any one is sufficient to ensure damnation. There is, therefore, no general rule to be laid down. The line of catechising must always be adapted to the necessities of the times, and that doctrine, be it what it may, wherein the faith of any individual is weak or wavering, becomes the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ* to him. With the Socinian, the conception by the HOLY GHOST is the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*. With the Baptist, the “One Baptism for the remission of sins” is the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*. Not that in reality either of these doctrines is one whit more necessary to salvation than the other, any more than we could venture to affirm that a head is more necessary to animal existence than a heart; still it may well be that in a given individual one only of these necessary organs is diseased, and that that person will require a treatment which would be absolute death to one whose disease lies in the other. And this is true with respect to classes as well as individuals, and to ages in the existence of the Catholic Church, as well as to times in the life of any given member of it. Bygone ages were zealous without charity, the present is charitable without zeal; in bygone ages religion was stiffened into formalism, in the present it is relaxed into indifference; once there was deep and implicit faith indeed, but it led to no works, now there are works, and earnest works too, but the faith is weak and wavering. The experienced catechist will adapt his teaching to the prevailing colouring which the fashion of the times or the opinion of his own particular circle casts over every individual, as well as to that individual’s peculiar idiosyncrasy.

The popular idea of grace, for instance, is the effect

of both these causes conjoined. It is caused no doubt by the Puritan teaching of the last century, but it takes such ready root among all classes, because it agrees so well with the natural bent of the English character. Few of our flocks are able to realize the idea of grace in the light of help from God. Grace as forgiveness they understand—grace requiring nothing on our parts but mere assent, which is the popular idea of faith, they receive readily—too readily, it is to be feared, for their souls' health; but grace as the nourishment from God afforded by CHRIST to His servants who are about to faint in their journey through the wilderness of this world, or grace as the armour of God supplied by CHRIST through the HOLY SPIRIT to His soldiers who are about to enter upon their warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil—that is to say, a something, given by God indeed gratuitously—a something, entirely independent of any merit on our part, but requiring of us, from its very nature, subsequent exertion and subsequent self-denial—is an idea totally foreign to their thoughts and habits. And this inability of comprehension is more conspicuous in proportion as they have been tainted with Puritanism. Under this teaching they seem incapable of conceiving it; they do not, indeed, deny in words either that the grace of God is given independently of their own merits, or that, when given, it enables them to do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth them, but they think, feel, act, and live as if they believed neither one of these propositions nor the other. Whatever their words may be, the real feeling in their minds is, that there must be a something effected on their parts to have earned the grace before they are justified in seeking it from God. Their idea of what they call regeneration, that is to say, the revival of an adult Christian—is based upon this: it is the reward of a certain amount of prayers, or the recompense of a certain period of misery, which is called “seeking.” They look upon it practically in the light of a payment or reward for work already done, not as a talent given freely, and, because given, requiring subsequent work. Ask a parishioner

why he absents himself from the LORD's Table, and he will tell you that he is not fit: that man's idea is, not that his will is indisposed to do the LORD's work, or that he is determined to continue in the practice of some sin of which he is conscious, and that therefore he is not fit to approach his God; his idea is, that he has not yet achieved, by his own unaided efforts, that amount of holiness which would entitle him to God's help.—Humbly as his idea is worded, that man's notion of Christianity is salvation by works—the LORD's Supper, whatever be his idea of the benefits received, is payment for work done.

If this is his idea of the LORD's Supper, still more is it his idea of Confirmation; and this is more excusable in him, because, by an unfortunate paronomasia, the word "confirm" is used in the office in a double sense. The question asked by the Bishop before proceeding to the act of Confirmation is, "Do you here, in the presence of God and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow made in your name at your Baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things that your godfathers and godmothers then undertook for you?" This expression fits in with a most unfortunate aptness to his preconceived idea of work and pay; he forgets that from the age when he could first articulate, up to the present time, no one single act of religion has he performed without first ratifying and confirming in his own person the vow and promise of his Baptism, and that, should he live beyond the age of man, no one single act will he perform without again ratifying and confirming the same—that is to say, without repenting heartily of his former sins, and steadfastly purposing, by God's grace, to believe His word and keep His commandments for the future, and that in his answer to the Bishop he is merely repeating that, without which, according to the covenants of his Baptism, he can receive no grace whatever. He forgets this; and if he is sufficiently enlightened to refrain from making the first answer which

comes to his lips—that he is going to take his sins off his godfathers' and godmothers' shoulders—he is perfectly certain to reply that he is going to confirm the promise made at his Baptism. The idea that Confirmation is strength sent by God to fit him for his subsequent battle with the world—sent gratuitously, because God sees that he is now entering it—is altogether foreign to the ideas of the self-relying energetic Saxon race; it is far more consentient with his Saxon feelings to consider it a matter of barter—that the grace, whatever it is, is given in return for something that he has done.

However, therefore, he may express himself, whatever conventional form of words he may use, that man's inward feeling, the habit upon which he lives and acts, is simply salvation by works, and in both these cases, and in all similar cases, he has adopted the idea, because it is consentient with the turn of his own mind, and with the habits, and feelings, and customs of the English nation.

Beyond, therefore, and over and above the particular adaptation of our catechising to the peculiarities and characteristics of each one of our individual parishioners separately, that general colouring also must be thrown over it which adapts it to the peculiarities and characteristics of Englishmen.

In the peculiar character of every age, as well as in the peculiar character of every individual, there is good as well as evil, and evil as well as good. The imaginative age may be full of faith, but it is unpractical; the utilitarian age may abound in works, but it is faithless. Times and their characters are changing continually; and, for that very reason, the Church, which, like Him Who founded it, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, is especially intended by God to moderate the changes of the world, and to counteract in turn the different evils which these changes call forth; and thus it is that its weapons will vary with its duties, and its duties will vary with the varying temper of the times, and thus it is that Hezekiah may even break in pieces, without incurring God's anger, that which Moses at the



command of God had erected. In the sixteenth century the Church's office may be to draw out practice from faith as its necessary consequence, whilst in the nineteenth it is called upon to refer to faith from practice as its necessary organ.

Practical England is unable to realize the doctrine of sacramental grace. It is natural from her very character, and from the character of the times, that she should be unable to realize a thing so entirely a matter of implicit faith. The doctrine of sacramental grace therefore becomes to England, in the nineteenth century, the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*; on this point therefore the Church has to prepare her weapons. And if this is done to the apparent disregard of other doctrines equally important, it is not that the Church underrates them, but that these are doctrines which the prevailing temper of the times does not go against or call in question.

The Faith of England is weak in the nineteenth century; she is unable to realize an abstract idea; but we need not conclude, therefore, that England is more irreligious than she has been, or than those nations are now which are still able to realize it. We may still thank God for the elements of holiness which we do possess by nature and by constitution. Such as the keen sense of duty or the apt readiness in carrying into practice that which we do comprehend and do realise, virtues which are peculiar and pre-eminent in England. We must not despair of or depreciate our people because they show an inaptitude to virtues which are alien to their idiosyncrasy. The combination of a lively faith and a keen sense of duty, would amount to perfection of character. But perfection of character is impossible; it is nowhere to be found in nature. In proportion as either one of its elements comes into light, by so doing it dwarfs and weakens the other.

The peculiarity of these present times is the extreme difficulty which is experienced by all classes alike in realising the Unseen. This arises in all probability from the pre-eminently busy, practical, and unimaginative



tive character of the nineteenth century. And the more so as it harmonises readily with the bustling, active, worldly character of the Saxon races, combining with and drawing into prominence all their peculiarities both of good and evil. Industry, honesty, energy, steadiness of purpose, all that forwards men in this world, all that advances nations in the race of civilization, is brought out into full light, while (as a necessary consequence) poetry, imagination, and therefore its concomitant faith as the evidence of things unseen languish and almost disappear. Men have become self-reliant, independent, and confident in their own resources. This carries them triumphantly through the difficulties of life; but the inevitable tendency of such a disposition is to weaken their reliance upon God. They are fertile in invention; it is a good quality in itself; but its shadow is a love of expediency. They are industrious and energetic; this is a great blessing; but its extreme is utilitarianism, rationalism, and a contempt of everything the use of which is not apparent.

Now, the teaching of the Church must be adapted to these peculiarities.

Let us take an instance. There is no need of impressing on the Spanish or Italian peasant the duty of going to Church, or the necessity of sacramental grace to his salvation, as we must do day after day in the case of our own parishioners. He is as fully impressed with it already as we can be ourselves. Not one day in that man's life passes over him, in which he is not on his knees in God's house. Not one Sunday, not one festival, in which he does not assist, so far as he is permitted, at the Lord's Supper. See him at Church; watch his devout, his reverent, his abstracted demeanour; nothing takes off his attention; his whole heart is in his worship. See him in the fields or in the town; the vesper bell strikes his ear; all work, all conversation, all employment, is suspended; his heart is joining in the prayers offered up at yon distant shrine. The English parish Priest contemplates this in sorrow and in bitterness; he thinks on his own flock; he remembers his own

fruitless exhortations, his own unheeded admonitions, his own forsaken services, his own neglected altars. Better, he is tempted to say in the bitterness of his soul, a Church, however erroneous in its doctrines, which produces such fruit as this.

But let us follow this very peasant into his common life,—this man is a murderer, perhaps, a robber, an adulterer; he is living in the daily constant and habitual breach of the commandments of that God whom he daily constantly and habitually worships; he is continually defiling that body, which he is continually calling on the HOLY GHOST to sanctify. He misuses daily, and turns to his own destruction the grace which he daily receives. True, we have robbers, and murderers, and adulterers among ourselves; but they are not religious men, they make no pretence to devotion, they live as if they had forgotten God.

The English observer is thunderstruck—the combination is impossible—the man must be a hypocrite. Not so. The observer is judging him by the rule of his own English heart and English feelings. That man is devout and sincere, and *yet* a sinner; his national idiosyncrasy is different from that which we have been accustomed to contemplate. He possesses a keen sense of devotion—the Englishman a keen sense of duty. Both alike are imperfect characters, possessing each his own element of godliness; both, by God's grace, are capable of being moulded into perfection through the instrumentality of His Church, but the process in each is different by reason of his different character. That faculty in each must be awakened and called into action which in each is sluggish and dormant.

To the Italian, therefore, naturally devout but eminently unpractical, we need say little on the necessity of sacramental grace,—not because it is less necessary to him than it is to the Englishman, but because his national character predisposes him to embrace the idea. What we should bring prominently forward in his case is the condition on which alone it would avail him, that is to say, doing the duty which this grace requires.

To an Englishman, on the other hand, the condition need but be mentioned—the idea of duty is already familiar to him. Our attention, therefore, must be devoted in the Englishman's case, to impressing upon him practically the idea of seeking God's help, the gratuitous character of that help, and the means of obtaining it; because we may be certain that if we can once impress upon his mind that a duty is laid upon him by any act or any blessing on God's part, his own honest nature will predispose him to do his utmost to discharge it.

Taking into consideration, therefore, not only the relative importance of the doctrines, but the national peculiarities of our flocks, our labour and our attention will be mainly devoted to impressing upon them practically, not theoretically,—1st. The idea of seeking God's help. 2nd. The gratuitous character of that help. 3rd. The peculiar channels which God has appointed for conveying that help. And 4th. The peculiar duties which result from each fresh accession of grace.

It will not be sufficient to state this series of propositions abstractedly—that not one of our flocks will be disposed to deny. It must be the basis of all our exhortations and all our requirements. It must be worked into the uncongenial mind of our people, little by little, line upon line, and precept upon precept. But if our work is laborious, we may comfort ourselves with the consciousness that it is sure. We are not likely to excite in the Englishman, as we might in the Italian, a mere unpractical devotion. Fix once in his mind the idea of seeking sacramental grace, and the idea of working with the grace so given follows naturally.

A fit preparation to an English mind for receiving the grace of Confirmation would be, for instance, the parable of the talents, or any similar passage, in order to furnish the leading idea; and upon this we must build, as upon an axiom, that sacramental grace is given by God freely to all His children—if not in equal proportions, still in proportions suited to their stations and capacities,—that all receive it alike gratuitously, not as a reward for learning their Catechism or anything else; but that,

according to the use we make of it after we do receive it, we work out our own salvation with it, and are received as faithful servants by the God who gave us the means by which we work it out ; or else, by the misuse of that same free gift, are cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It is manifest that the same spiritual treatment would be necessarily inapplicable to all cases, that what would be life to the one would be death to the other ; that he who would sharpen and exaggerate zeal in an age when, for the love of God, every man's hand was against his neighbour, and he who would denounce formalism at a time when it is difficult even to bring our own people to Church twice a week ; he who would speak of duty only to the man who is blind to sacramental grace ; or of devotion only to him whose faith is unfruitful of good works ; of eternal life to the Pharisee, or of formal hypocrisy to the Sadducee, would alike be doing the devil's work with God's weapons ; and, however well-intentioned he might be, would remind us of Paley's inexperienced architect, who added weight instead of support to the falling wall, by building his buttress on the wrong side.

The Church catechist will always regulate his line of teaching by the prevailing colouring which the character of the nation, the fashion of the age, or the tone of any particular class of society, casts over every individual, as well as the particular idiosyncrasy of the individual himself.

Perfection of character must be gradually and painfully built up by grace ; the office, therefore, of the Church in any particular nation, or any particular age, is to cherish the element which that age or nation does possess—to use it as a foundation, and upon it to build up the perfect Christian. In both cases alike she will have to encounter difficulties, different no doubt according to the different aspects, but we have no reason to suppose that it is easier to educe practice from faith, than we find it ourselves to build up faith from practice.

# GENERAL LECTURES.

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## In Church.

### I.

## THE AWAKENING.

### CHANGE OF THE SERVICES AT SEPTUAGESIMA.

“Our Profession is to follow the example of our SAVIOUR CHRIST, and to be made like unto Him.”—*Service for Infant Baptism.*

IF I were to ask any one person of all those now present in the church, why it was that our LORD JESUS CHRIST came down from heaven, there is not one of you who would not be able to answer me, there is not one of you who would not say that it was to die for our sins—to buy us back from the hard task-master to whom we had sold ourselves,—and to give us again an inheritance in heaven. You might not all express this in the same words, but all would give me the same meaning; ignorant and uninstructed as any of you may be on other points, at least you would know that.

Before we go on any further, just stop and consider the extreme thankfulness with which we should regard this. The Gospel, the glad tidings of our salvation are now so universally known, that they have become things of course, things of which none of us can say where it was that he first learnt them, or who it was that first told him of them; but of which, notwithstanding, he is just as sure, as he is that it became light on the Christmas morning of CHRIST's birth when the sun rose, and was dark on Good Friday after the sun had set. This



is not natural religion, it did not come to you of its own accord. Some one must have told it first of all, and as no man could know anything whatever about such matters, it must have been revealed from God. Thank Him, therefore, thank Him heartily, that He has so burnt it in upon your minds, that it has now as it were become natural to you. And now go on to show your thankfulness by building upon that known fact, all that He would have you build.

And in order to do this, ask yourselves first, if to make satisfaction for our sins, and to bear our punishment, were all that our blessed SAVIOUR had to do upon earth, would it not have been sufficient that He came down from heaven—took our nature upon Him,—bore our punishment,—and then returned? Why did He live those four and thirty years upon the earth? You will not all of you be able to answer me this question, but a great many will, especially the younger ones, because most of you have been taught your Collects, and have been questioned, Sunday after Sunday, on the meaning of them, and have been shown how to look for their meaning in the Epistles and Gospels. Take up your Prayer Book and look for the second Sunday after Easter; do you not see there that Almighty God gave us His only SON, not only “to be a sacrifice for sin,” but also to be an “example of godly life;” that is why He lived four and thirty years in this wicked world. He not only took our punishment, He not only told us how redeemed men ought to live, He not only gave us grace to do it, but having our nature, being one of us, He lived the life Himself, that He would have us His people to live. If we would say the task is hard, we are but men, we cannot do it; He would answer, See it was done, and by a man; if we would say we are but weak, we have but the strength of men, not the strength of God, He would answer, How can you say that you are weak, how can you say that you have only the strength of men, when you, the members, are so joined to CHRIST the Head, that you are no longer twain but one flesh? He could do all things by His heavenly nature, and so



can you by precisely the same means; you can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth you. If CHRIST is not at this moment in you, and you in Him, whose fault is that but yours, who neglect those ordinances which make you so?

Follow CHRIST as your example; this is all we Christians have to do upon earth; this is our business; this is our task in our Master's vineyard; this is what He set us to do when He called us out of the market-place of this world, where we should have been standing idle all the days of our lives, and sent us into the vineyard of His Church, where all who stay there are His servants, and must work for Him. This is our work; to do what He did. And now I am going to show you how to do it; I am speaking to all of you, no doubt; but I am speaking more particularly to-day to those who are going to be confirmed; so I will show you a picture of your own Church lives, from your own Church calendar.

You are to follow CHRIST not only from birth to death, but to resurrection also, and judgment, and heaven.

Well, He was born on Christmas-day, He died on Good Friday, He rose on Easter-day, and went to heaven on Holy Thursday. There is the beginning and end of your work, and now let us trace it out.

Prepare to meet your LORD, says Advent Sunday; that is your call from the market-place. Go into His vineyard and get your work ready against His coming in the evening to look at it. Now for your tools, those things which are to be given you to work with. There are the Holy Scriptures, says the Second Sunday in Advent; and to teach you them, says the Third Sunday, there are God's Ministers, who are commissioned by that very Master, to show you how to use them, and to give you what the Fourth Sunday tells you is necessary too; the presence of that Master and His strength; the Master's eye and His hand. Well, children, you have had this ever since you were born. Did we not christen you? Did we not, as stewards of God's mysteries, endue you with your Master's strength, by making you members of Him? Did we not afterwards put

you to school? Did we not teach you to read God's blessed book? Did we not catechise you week after week, and day after day, to see if you understood it? These are the tools that God has given you to do His work with. And now you must have something on your part, and that you shall have from the calendar too. You must have readiness and willingness like S. Andrew, the first Saint in the calendar. You must come when you are called, as he came when he was called, and leave your worldly things behind you, as he left them. And then you must have faith; not the faith of S. Thomas the second Saint, you must not wait till you see and understand, and then believe, because you cannot see God face to face, as S. Thomas did, till the evening is come, till you die, till your work is finished or left unfinished, and it will be too late then. Those, and those only, will be blessed, who have "not seen and yet have believed."

And now you are prepared; you know what to do, you have everything needful to do it with. Now comes Christmas-day, and you start, you take up your cross and follow your Master in His work; but do not expect this to be an easy life. Remember the very first day that comes after Christmas-day. Remember S. Stephen, and the opportunity *he* had of following his Master by praying for his enemies, just as that Master had done before him; this was no easy trial for S. Stephen, and yet this is the very first example that meets you on your course. Do you think you could look up to heaven and see JESUS, the *man* standing at the right hand of God, in His glory, unless you had love enough to stand at the foot of the cross, and see CHRIST the God through His humiliation?

Look at S. John's day, which follows S. Stephen's.

And do you think that your eyes are fit to look upon such holy and heavenly things, unless they are something like His Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? Look at the Holy Innocents' day, which follows S. John's.

Do you think that you are going to do your Master's work, unless you are obedient to those who are set over

you in the LORD? Do you think that if you do not hear the Church you will be anything more than a heathen man and a publican? Look at the day of Circumcision. See your Master, Who went before you. See your pattern Whom you are to follow; see Him "obedient to the law for man;" see Him submitting to what, in His case at all events, was but an empty form, for He had no sins to cast away, doing it for no other reason than because it was a law of the Church. Doing it for man, and for our example, and because it thus becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. You will do none of CHRIST's work; no, nor know what it is, without that lesson, obedience. Courage, and love, and purity, you have been learning from His Saints; obedience is the lesson you learn from the first of CHRIST's own holy days.

And the second is given for your encouragement; many a lesson of CHRIST's goodness and our gratitude and duty might we learn from Epiphany; but I am drawing now the picture of a Christian life, and I will give you one of encouragement. Do not say that you are too poor, too ignorant, too little of scholars, as you yourselves would call it, for your Master's work. All He wants is the honesty of purpose, that brought those wise men so far to serve CHRIST; and the doing your best, which made the prayers and the alms of the Roman Cornelius to be accepted. You must have found out for yourselves, by this time, what surprised S. Peter so much. I need hardly tell the baptized members of CHRIST that "God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."

Be of good courage; not a hair of your head shall be injured in all your trials; ye are of more value than many sparrows." Now, go forth and follow your Master; for your work, like His, begins from childhood.

See, from the first Sunday after Epiphany, how He lived with His earthly parents and was subject to them; and remember the fifth commandment. See how He increased in wisdom and stature, in favour with God and man. Learn from the second Sunday His kindness to

His friends. Learn from the third His goodness to His countrymen. Learn the same from the fourth, and see how He extended it to His own followers. Do not be discouraged that you “see the ungodly in such prosperity, and flourishing like a green bay tree.” Do what David did, “go into the Sanctuary of God, and learn the end of those men.” Learn from the fifth Sunday that it is out of your own Master’s merciful kindness to your own self that they do flourish; that He leaves them, lest in punishing *them* He should hurt *you*. Do not be discouraged, do not be dissatisfied, or think yourselves hardly treated by that which, when you come to the harvest, the end of the world, you will find to be an act of kindness towards yourself.

This is your work. This is what is set before you; and the sixth Sunday tells it you again, and sums it all up for you. You do not know, it tells you, what you shall be at the last day; but you do know as much as this, that when your Master comes, you must be like Him, and you will know what you are then, if you do not now; for you will see Him as He is, and as He is so will you be; but it tells you what you cannot help seeing the truth of—that if you have this hope in you, you must purify yourselves, because you know that He is pure, and without purity you cannot be like Him; and it leaves you with this awful warning—Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous; he that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

Here let us pause. Here is a great and sudden break in the Church services. The lessons go back at once and without any preparation from the glorious chapters of Isaiah to the sad records of the Book of Genesis—from what CHRIST has done for us, to what we have done for CHRIST. I said that we are learning a picture of our lives from the Church Calendar: and so we are. This call which the Bishop makes upon us is like the break between the sixth Sunday after Epiphany and Septuagesima. You have been baptized. You have been set forth in your Christian course. You have used your baptismal vows well or ill. You have had tools put into



your hands. You have worked with them much or little. You have had God's ministers to speak a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it, when you turned to the right hand, or when you turned to the left," and you have paid more or less attention to them. At any rate, you have gone for a certain distance on the road of life, which your Master trod before you, and as you come to manhood or womanhood, you find your trials thickening, your dangers increasing, your temptations growing stronger, and the ties which have hitherto kept you to your duty growing weaker: you want more help; you have a right to it, for your Master promised it to you when He first took you to be part of Him; and you call upon His steward, the Bishop, to give you what your Master promised. Yes, says the Bishop, you shall have it. I will come and bring it to you. But first look back at your past lives. The help which you are asking for is not the first which you have had. See what you have done with that which you have had already. Remember the Parable of the Talents.<sup>1</sup> You have had a talent committed to you already—what use have you put it to? Have you hid it in the ground? Your Master has been some time absent. It is now fourteen or fifteen years since you first engaged in His service; let us see what work you have done. You must have done something for baptismal grace, and God's Word and God's ministers are no small things to work with. I will not come just now, the Bishop says; I will give you some time to look back upon your past life; for I know that as the benefit is great, if you come for it with a true penitent heart, so is the danger great if you come unworthily. Judge yourselves; try yourselves "by the rule of God's commandments." You have the earlier part of CHRIST's life before you in the services from Christmas to this present season; and you have the earlier part of your own lives to compare it with. You see what CHRIST was; you see what you may be, and ought to be. See now what you are, what you have done with the help you had, and then I will bring you some more if you want it.

<sup>1</sup> Sexagesima.



Now, my dear children, stop and consider—is not such a call as this enough to frighten us? Is it not enough to make us turn from Isaiah to Genesis—from the redemption to the fall, from glory to shame? Can we look back upon our past lives and see what we might have been, and what we are, without thinking of that last great call, when the same question will be asked us, and we shall have no time left us for repenting; when that sentence of the last Sunday after Epiphany will be sounded in our ears—“He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning;” when GOD will say, Ye were My children indeed, but ye have been disinherited; when CHRIST will say, Ye were branches of the True Vine, but ye bore no fruit, and ye were cut off. The last Sunday after Epiphany, and its Epistle, will be the last act of our spiritual lives. We shall never go on to the Gospel of Septuagesima; we shall never see the Master of the vineyard when the shadows of evening have come over us, calling in His true servants and giving them their hire. We shall be called, but we shall have no work to show, and we shall hide our faces. Our tools, wherewith we might have worked out our salvation, though it were with fear and trembling, will lie useless by our sides, and we shall hear the word, Take therefore the talent from him, and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The festival of Easter is the festival of the Resurrection, and at Easter you will receive your first communion. You will therefore receive your first perfect union with CHRIST at the commemoration of His Resurrection; let it be a resurrection unto life to you, and in order that it should be, make your examinations, which will commence from this day, and without passing through which you will not be presented to the Bishop, not receive permission to partake of that communion here on earth, make these the type of your own judgment at the last day. “Judge yourselves, that you be not judged of the LORD.” Go over your faith carefully and attentively. See what have been required of you.

I shall be ready to help you in this. I shall remain at home to receive all who come to me. I shall put before you the things which you have promised to renounce, and shall ask you searchingly if you have renounced them. I shall show you the articles of the Christian faith, so that you shall all understand what you have promised to believe, and shall ask you if you do believe them. I shall examine the commandments by CHRIST's broad law, and ask you if you have obeyed their spirit as well as their letter. I know most of you well. I cannot tell your secret sins, no doubt, nor can I give you advice on those points, except so far as you choose to consult me; but I know your lives and general characters. In most cases I can tell the sins you are most addicted to, and the temptations likely to have weight with each of you. I can show you when and how best to apply for assistance.

Do not come to me in classes or societies—come singly, accompanied, if possible, by a godfather or godmother, who will undertake your instruction, and will bring you to the Bishop; but, at all events, come singly, each one for him or herself, just as you will stand singly before the judgment-seat of CHRIST. I will afterwards form you into parties of two or three for instruction; but I cannot speak to you of neglected duties by classes, because that which I say to one will not apply to another.

You have now, as it were, a second trial allowed you, and an increase of grace promised. You may examine yourselves now, and whereinsoever you may have found yourselves to have come short, you may ask for help on that particular point; and if you ask in faith you will receive. You may repent some particular habit of sin, and if you are in earnest, grace will be given to enable you to break through it. For all sins, whether of ignorance or of wilfulness, you may ask for pardon in CHRIST's name, and if you ask in sincerity; and because you love the God you have offended, not because you fear the punishment He threatens, you will receive it. Wicked as you may have been, you may wash your hands in innocency, and so may you go to God's altar. David,

who wrote this very sentence, was not himself innocent, but he wrote it by God's permission, that those who followed him in his sins, might follow him in his repentance also.

But remember this, that there will be an Easter of which this is only the type, that there will be a festival of the resurrection of which this is only the remembrancer. There will be a judgment of which this examination will be but a foretaste, and (if God will) a preparation, that at that great festival there will be no further trial, no room for repentance, though you seek it earnestly and with tears. To him who is unfit for Communion next Easter here on earth, some further time may, it is possible, be allowed; but he who is unfit for Communion on that Easter, is unfit for ever. As you then find yourselves, so will you be. "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still; and, behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be."

Go home now and consider—the Church has set apart this particular season between Septuagesima Sunday and Shrove Tuesday, for the reckoning up of your sins, and has pointed out special chapters and passages of Scripture to enable you to do so,—put that to its use. The Bishop also calls upon you. Then there is a double reason why you should do so. Find out your defects, then bewail your sins through Lent: then make resolves for amendment; then come for God's blessing and protection at Confirmation, and put the seal upon all that you have done by the Holy Communion; and when at that great Easter of the last day, you hear the voice of Him which testifieth of these things, calling to you, and bidding you show your work, and saying, "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me," you may in humble confidence and peaceful hope, answer with S. John, "Amen. Even so come, LORD JESUS."

## II.

### THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS.

“The Old Testament is not contrary to the New, for both in the Old Testament and in the New everlasting life is offered to mankind by CHRIST, who is the only mediator between GOD and man, being both GOD and Man: *wherefore they are not to be heard which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises.*”—Art. VII.

BEFORE we begin the special subject for the evening, I will ask you to open your Prayer-Books and look at what I have but just read—the beginning of the Seventh Article. The remarkable point of this is, that in the *Old Testament* everlasting life should be offered by CHRIST, and yet, to any one reading the Old Testament, it would appear that the name of CHRIST is never mentioned from one end of it to the other.

Perhaps some of you can tell me how this is.

“From the numerous prophecies about our SAVIOUR,” said A., “which we find through the whole of the Old Testament, all of these we see fulfilled in the New; and, as these began from the very fall,—‘the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head’—they show the purpose of GOD from the beginning of Revelation. It was dimly hinted at at first, but so plainly announced as time went on, that though the old fathers, as they are called in the Article, could not know all that we know, they must have known quite enough to bear them out in looking for more than ‘transitory promises.’”

“Not a bad answer,” said the Parson, “but it does not entirely meet the question. The prophecies you speak of were quite sufficient to convince the few, that

GOD intended a deliverance, and had prepared a scheme of redemption, by which eternal life would be offered to fallen man; but I do not see how they could have learned from this that eternal life was offered already to them by a SAVIOUR, centuries before that SAVIOUR appeared on earth. You must go to something beyond the prophecies."

"The types?" said A.

"The typical personages," suggested B.

"Yes," said the Parson, "you are much nearer; but you would be nearer still, had you said that the whole scheme of God's government which we read of in the Old Testament, is typical—that there is no character mentioned in the Law and the Prophets who is not a type of some one in the Gospels—that there is no incident in the history of the Old Church which is not descriptive of something in the New—not simply that there are types of CHRIST to be found in the Old Testament, but that the whole is typical. It is like a group of statuary concealed by a veil, and the same group when the veil is removed: you see the same outlines and general appearances; they are not changed, but you see now the details which produced those general appearances—the group is the very same, only now you see it and understand it better. Perhaps the very same thing will happen again at the last day, and another veil will be then removed; we shall then see still further into the details of God's government, and shall recognise in the Church of the Blessed, then fully revealed, the very same grouping which we saw outlined in the Old Testament and partially disclosed in the New."

I have said this, because I am going to-night to teach you Christian doctrines by Jewish types. You might say, Why teach by that which is less clear when you have that which is more clear to your hand?—why teach by the Old Dispensation those who are living under the New?

Because you will understand the one by comparing it with the other, and because you will thus see the unchangeableness of God's purposes and of His government; because the same idea appearing under many



different forms, even though those forms be less distinct than the original, will be less likely to be misunderstood. We get our doctrines from the Gospel, but we see that we have not misunderstood them, by comparing them with the same doctrines under the law.

The subject that I am going to explain to-day is the life of the Christian, shadowed out and typified by the wanderings of God's people in the wilderness.

The literal history you all know from the Bible, but I will draw its chief incidents together. God's people, living in a land not their own, are brought under bondage by a hard and cruel taskmaster; they are called by their God to return to their own country, but, their taskmaster being too strong for them, they are unable to obey the call. God sends a deliverer and a leader; a long and difficult contest ensues, marked by miracles, every one of which attests the power of God, and deliverance is at last effected, though not without blood. God's chosen people, now obeying the call, set forth on their journey, and are delivered from the pursuit of their oppressor by passing through water.

It is at this period of their journey that a heavenly Guide appears to them, who from that time till their actual arrival and establishment in their own country, is to be the suggester of every movement, and at the same time the defence against every enemy.

After this deliverance is effected, *and not before*, a code of laws is given to them, and a particular form of worship. They are then set forward on their journey to their own country, with a heavenly-appointed leader, with a commissioned priesthood, and under the immediate guidance of that mysterious Appearance; and are safe while they submit to be so guided, and only as long as they submit.

The land to which they are travelling is abundant in all manner of food, and, to prove this, they have some specimens of it—some foretaste, as it were, shown to them; but that land through which, for their want of confidence, they are obliged to take their journey by slow and painful stages, affords no food whatever, to sustain them; they would faint and perish, were they

not supernaturally sustained by bread from heaven itself. They are tempted in various manners through the whole course of their journey—by lust, by self-will, by unfaithfulness, by discontent. Many fall away, many perish: of all those called, very few indeed arrive at the boundary of that pleasant country which has been their aim and object from the beginning; and when they do arrive, they find that boundary to be a deep impassable river; but the moment the feet of the priests, bearing the outward visible signs of God's principal blessings, touch the water, it parts of itself, and the chosen people, sustained by the presence of these outward visible signs of inward spiritual grace, pass through and take possession of the land which God from the beginning had prepared for them.

Here is a plain narrative of facts—the mere relation of the things which happened, which every one could see, and which it required no inspiration to record—which, in fact, were recorded just as well and just as accurately by the Jewish historian Josephus, as they were by the inspired writer Moses.

But if we examine this group of facts by the Revelation which we possess, we shall see that this course of events, accurately and in all its details, represents the life of every Christian, from his call out of an unregenerate state of existence, up to his final admission into heaven; and if we show that, we shall show that God's providence then was in no ways different from God's providence now; we shall show not only that the death of CHRIST procured redemption for them as it does for us, but that every detail of the means by which we appropriate and avail ourselves of this redemption was arranged from the beginning of the world, and in its real spiritual meaning never has been changed, and never will be.

The land of Egypt, called so frequently the land of bondage, cannot but suggest to us the bondage of sin—in short, the natural state into which man, as the descendant of Adam, is born; and if this be so, Pharaoh the taskmaster is evidently a type of the devil, whose

servants we are while we continue in that state ; and Moses, first rejected as a leader and driven into the wilderness, and afterwards received and followed, represents as evidently our Blessed SAVIOUR. Not without a hard struggle,—not without many miracles,—not without death,—and not uncommemorated by a sacrifice, is the deliverance effected. But of this I will not speak now, as it belongs to another set of types. At last God's chosen people are enabled to break from the power of the devil, and to obey the call of their LORD. Their first step—that by which they are saved—that by which they pass from the land of bondage to the state of freedom—is through water, which purifies them by dividing them from the unregenerate land, and by the same act preserves them from the power of their enemy. They are baptized in the Red Sea, and this is the very word the Apostle uses in speaking of it. Thus has God from the beginning fixed Baptism as the boundary between the unregenerate and the regenerate condition of men. This call may be obeyed or disobeyed, but as long as we are on the Egyptian side of the water, we are still in the power of the enemy, who on his own ground is too strong for us : we are preserved by the act of passing through water.

But water is not that which saves us—it is only the means. While the Israelites were in the act of passing through the water, the power of God overshadowed them : then it is that we hear of the pillar of the cloud, which was from henceforth to go before them, and to show the way ; and not only that, but when their enemies pressed upon them, it went behind them—it cast a light upon the path of the chosen ones, but was a trouble and a discomfiture to their pursuers,—it stood between the regenerate and their enemies, so that the one came not nigh the other throughout the whole of the night. What Christian can fail to see in this the HOLY GHOST Who first overshadowed us at Baptism, and from that time forward is a guide to our feet and a light to our paths, leading the way<sup>1</sup> unto all truth, and at the same

<sup>1</sup> Ὁδηγήσει.

time preserving us from the evil one, who would, if he could, bring us back to slavery,—that Guide which, during the night, (that is to say, during the helplessness of infancy and childhood,) had stood between us and harm.

And now we are coming to that part of the Israelites' journey which typifies your present state and future course in life.

After all these blessings, *after* this great preservation, and not before, the Israelites come to Sinai to receive the commands of their God and their directions for their future journey, while their hearts are yet warm, and their gratitude fresh with the recollection of the preservation they had just experienced. The wilderness on which they are to be launched represents the present world—barren, unfruitful in all spiritual sustenance, yet lying as a necessary journey between the actual situation of God's chosen people, and Heaven, their promised land.

Upon the edge of that wilderness you are standing now, and before you have forgotten your great deliverance,—while you are thinking of the difference between the unregenerate state on that side of the water, and the regenerate on this,—while you see your pursuer driven back, and feel yourself delivered from him,—and before you have sunk under any of those temptations, or experienced any of those grievous trials that must beset you in the wilderness which lies before you,—you come to me, God's representative, to receive at my mouth the law and the testimony, you come to the Bishop, the steward of CHRIST's grace, to receive at his hands strength for your journey. Confirmation is your spiritual Sinai.

Henceforward you will pass through the wilderness of your earthly pilgrimage, but across that wilderness you have the Heavenly Guide to lead you, that appeared to you first at your baptism. You must wait for His leading, just as the Israelites did for that of the pillar of the cloud. You must go on when He leads you, you must stop when He stops. You must not be afraid of undertaking any duty He points out, impossible as it may seem to you. Remember what happened to the children



of Israel, when they thought only of the cities walled up to heaven, and the children of Anak that guarded them, rather than of the Heavenly Leader of their own host. Neither must you be looking out for your own means of passing forward in your journey, where the Spirit of God gives no directions. Remember what happened to the children of Israel, when, without the Word of the LORD, they rushed toward the promised land, and were discomfited by their enemies.

The real way of serving God lies in waiting for His call, and then obeying it.

The wilderness of this world will produce no spiritual sustenance; neither must you look for it, that would be like the Israelites looking back to the flesh-pots of Egypt, and being discontented because in the path that they were following they could find none of the leeks, and the onions, and the melons, and the cucumbers, which they remembered in the land of their captivity. But you need not perish with hunger or with thirst because the wilderness produces neither spiritual meat nor spiritual water. Remember how Moses and Aaron struck the rock, and how the waters flowed out abundantly, and remember how the Apostle explains this, that the Rock which follows us is CHRIST, and that under the touch of those whom He has commissioned, His grace flows upon His people as abundantly as water.

Nor will you faint for want of food; remember how in that long journey "man did eat angels' food, for He gave them bread enough." So CHRIST supplies you now with spiritual food; He gives you bread enough; throughout the whole of that desolate wilderness, the world, your souls are strengthened and refreshed by the Body and Blood of CHRIST, just as your bodies are refreshed by bread and wine.

Do not presume on your privileges. Do not fancy that because you were called, therefore you are chosen; because you are regenerate, therefore you are safe; because you have had so much done for you, therefore you have nothing to do for yourselves. Remember the temptations that beset the children of Israel from the begin-



ning of their course, down to the very end of it. Remember how many of them fell away: remember the sins for which they were punished; self-will, ingratitude, lust, disobedience to the authorities God had set over them, choosing their own form of worship instead of the pattern of those things which Moses had seen in the Mount. Remember the thousands that perished under each succeeding manifestation of God's wrath. Now if you have any doubt that all this applies to us, quite as much as it did to them who actually passed through these dangers, open your Bibles at the tenth chapter of S. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, and see what he there says about it. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea: And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink of the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was CHRIST. But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

Now mark what follows:—"Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt CHRIST, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

And when at last you shall come to the borders of that promised land, will not you be divided from it, just as they were, by a deep, dark, impassable river? does not the Jordan of the Israelites typify to the Christian the river of death, that even at the end of his journey lies between him and heaven? and what is it that opens the

way to him? what is it that shows him the way we must go? for as Joshua said to the people, we have not passed that way heretofore. "The ark of the covenant of the LORD, borne by His priests, passed before them through Jordan, and as soon as the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, the waters stood and rose up in a heap, and were cut off, and the people passed through."

These words are also written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world, that is to say, upon whom the objects of God, through the whole previous course of this world, are come.

There is no passage to our promised land but through the river of death; there is no passage across that river revealed to us but by the covenants of God, and those covenants are borne before you by the priests whom He has commissioned to bear them.

### III.

## THE SEASON OF WATCHFULNESS AND SELF-EXAMINATION.

“Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.”—Isa. xxi. 11, 12.

SEPTUAGESIMA is the seventieth from Easter—

Sexagesima is the sixtieth from Easter—

Quinquagesima is the fiftieth from Easter.

And as each week rolls round Easter draws nearer.

And Easter typifies the Resurrection, and the Resurrection brings the Judgment.

In the earlier part of our lives it is hardly human nature to look forward. In childhood we hardly look forward to even our future lives, much less to death, and judgment, and eternity. Our lives, then, like the calendar to which I have been comparing them, date back from Christmas. Happy for us if we have employed well our baptismal grace, and if, as our earlier years passed by, we have made our own, and laid up in store for future use those virtues of Him Whose steps we are following, which one after another the earlier Sundays of the Calendar have set before us.

I tell you now, that you have turned over a leaf in the calendar of life, just as you have turned over a leaf in the calendar of your Prayer Book. I tell you now that your calendar begins to date itself from the end of your life, not from the beginning; that your mind is opened; that your reason is strengthened; that your understanding is enlarged; that you begin to see whither

the road of all these virtues is leading ; that heaven and a blessed resurrection are coming into your sight ; just as this season of the Church's calendar, which you are passing through, dates itself from Easter.

You begin to think more seriously of these things, and you come to me, the LORD's watchman, whom He has set over you, to warn you of your dangers, and you say to me, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" And I say to you, "The morning cometh, and also the night." The morning in which the LORD hires His labourers, and sends them into His vineyard : the night in which He reckons with them and pays them their wages. I say, "if ye will inquire," if you will look into your past years, and find out what you have already prepared for the work of life, and what you have neglected, and where you have come short, and what you want yet, "inquire ye." I am ready to answer your questions. I am ready to give you the benefit of my experience. I am ready, from the Word of God committed to my keeping, to show you at one view your duties and your means of performing them. If you have strayed from your path, "return." Whether you have strayed or not, "come." I will show you what CHRIST was ; and, therefore what you, who have promised to be His soldiers and servants, ought to be.

This is the subject of these three Sundays, and the consciousness of our short-comings when fully and fairly set before us, the difference between what we are, and what we ought to have been, and might have been, will naturally lead us to the next subject which will then be set before us by Ash-Wednesday and the Sundays in Lent—penitence. In the character in which I place myself before you, I will give you the watchword of the night. That for these three Sundays is *Watch*. That for the next six is *Pray*. Watch now ; examine yourself now ; see what you have left undone now, and then you will be ready of yourselves to lament it in sackcloth and ashes, and to pray for more help from God. For as you can reach Easter only by passing through these two seasons, Septuagesima and Lent, so you can reach a joyful

resurrection only by passing through the doctrines which these two seasons teach—self-examination and repentance.

In order to lead your thoughts into this train, watch the change which has taken place in the Gospels. Instead of the miracles, and acts of power and goodness, which we have been reading of, and which, if dwelt upon too much, would lead us into thinking too highly of ourselves as people deserving all these great and good things which were done for us, and thus falling into that spiritual pride which was the ruin of the Jews, instead of these, and such like subjects, we have the parable of the householder going out into the market-place to hire labourers for his vineyard; and the parable of the sower sowing good seed in all sorts of soils; and the blind men calling upon the Blessed Lord as He passed by to open their eyes, that they may see the path that lies before them. It is not for nothing that the Church arranges this order of her Gospels—puts these three scenes together in this season which calls for watchfulness—and puts the season of watchfulness after that portion of the calendar which sets forth our SAVIOUR's virtues, and before that portion of it which calls for our penitence, having shown us that with all the means of grace which He has given us, we have fallen so very short of them.

You all know that these parables are but types—pictures, as it were, of great truths, which they who consider them with a trustful heart will easily find out for themselves. You all know that in this particular case, the householder is our Blessed SAVIOUR—that the vineyard is His Holy Church—that the market-place is the world—and that He goes forth and hires us His labourers, who, were it not for His gracious calling, would be standing idle in that market-place and doing nothing, because able to do nothing for our salvation. You know that He sets us each our own work in that vineyard, the Church, to cultivate and make fruitful the vines, which are the different virtues we have been learning from the last eight or ten Gospels—obedience, faith,



benevolence, charity, love—and that He graciously shows us that He will give us our rewards not so much according to the amount of work done as according to our readiness and good will in doing it.

Now, the question that I want to ask you is—"How have you been doing your own part of the work?" You have been among those called early in the morning—almost from your birth have you been soldiers and servants of our LORD. You have had your task set you—a light and easy task hitherto proportioned to your strength. You know that whether the task set you be great or little, the reward for doing it will be far beyond your deserts. But the question I am asking you is, "How have you done it?" I do not find that one of the men so called into their LORD's vineyard idled away their time, whether that time was much or little. What have you been doing?

These are reflections which would naturally spring up in your minds, from having had your duties set before you, one by one, as they have been ever since Advent Sunday; and now being reminded by the Gospel for Septuagesima that they are duties—that is to say, not things to be admired, and taken up or laid aside as we feel disposed, but task work set us. These things are like school, where all sorts of good and useful things are set before us, not only because they are good and useful, but that we may use them and employ them for our own benefit, and that of others, when we go out into the world.

And now comes the examination. What stores have we laid up, and what do we want further, to fit us for the harder and more real work that is before us.

But, lest you should not lay this to heart, let me point out another change in the services. Look at the Sunday lessons. We change at once from the prophecies of Isaiah to the records of Genesis. This is not merely because, having ended the Old Testament, it is necessary to begin it again. The Book of Isaiah is by no means the last book of the Old Testament. The reason is this: as long as the Gospels were relating our blessed privi-

leges as Christians, and the duties of our calling, and the means vouchsafed to enable our fallen nature to perform those high duties—all that part which I compare to childhood and to school—the Gospel Prophet sounds again and again in our ears those glorious promises of God—tells us of the office, and nature, and character of our Blessed Redeemer,—shows us that, though these things may very possibly be hard to flesh and blood, yet that it was to enable us to perform these very things that our SAVIOUR came down from heaven.

But when, at this season, the tone of the Gospels changes,—when they begin to ask us how have we performed those tasks ourselves?—then the lesson changes its tone also, and shows us that we are not the first who have been placed in covenant with God, or aided by God's protection, or enlightened by God's presence. It shows us that our first parents fell, and asks us, in a voice not to be mistaken, Have you who have been adopted in Baptism, and then and there replaced in the innocence they had forfeited for themselves and you, have you done better? And if the answer be, as I am afraid it must be, "We have sinned with our fathers and done wickedly," then we are brought at once to thank our blessed SAVIOUR with all our hearts and minds, and soul and strength, that we are not, as they were, shut out from that happy Paradise, with the flaming sword barring the entrance, and shutting out the return to the Tree of Life, but are permitted to pass from Quinquagesima to Lent—from self-examination to penitence—to plead the atonement He has made, and to claim the promise with which we begin our daily prayer—that "when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."

Thank GOD your SAVIOUR also that He deals with you more lovingly than He did even with the labourers in the vineyard; them He rewarded not according to the amount of the work done, but according to their faithfulness in doing it. So He does you; but them He called but once; they all came, and came gladly: you too He has

called, and some of you came gladly too, but some did not,—some went back to the market-place. The morning of your lives is already past; you are entering upon the forenoon's work; and now, at the third hour, He calls upon you again. Will you hear His voice?—will you “return?”—will you “come?”—for, if you will, there is more work to be done, and more strength to do it with. The day of trial will wax warmer presently; come all of you—you who have worked honestly hitherto, and you who, having not worked honestly, yet are willing and desirous of doing so—come all of you and be confirmed at God's hand for the harder work that is yet before you.

Now pass on to the parable of Sexagesima, and let me show you, not only that you are all called at this your third hour by the Master of the vineyard, not only that your tasks are set, but that, as you are not able to perform them through the heat of the day in your own strength, the same means of grace is offered to you all. I need not tell you the parable of the Sower, you have all heard it often enough to recollect its story; but recollect the sort of field spoken of, which is common enough in Syria to this day: not the square, well-hedged and well-cultivated field that we see here, but open ground only partially reclaimed, with large rocky spaces and patches of unbroken land, producing still their natural crop of thorns and briars, with perhaps an unhedged mule-track running through the midst of it, so that the seed which falls at one cast from the sower, may very easily fall on any or all the four sorts of land spoken of in the parable.

Now, the parable is this:—The seed is the Word of God—not the Bible only, but every means of grace which has become a means of grace by the gracious words recorded in that Bible, and, among them, that which we are now considering—the strengthening grace imparted in Confirmation. All these have been and will be sowed equally to all.

You have all been baptized—all made equally members of CHRIST; you have all been instructed by the

Church in those things which “a Christian ought to believe to his soul’s health :” you have all been at Church to-day, and might have been there every day of your lives ; when there, you have all alike been forgiven your repented sins ; you have all alike been permitted to offer your thanksgivings for mercies received, and your prayers for mercies desired ; you might all have listened equally to the Scripture read in your ears ; and, to the best of my belief, there is not a house in the parish without its Bible. This is what you have enjoyed, and what you will enjoy is the equal imparting of strength from the HOLY GHOST at Confirmation, and the equal communion with your LORD and SAVIOUR here on earth. Surely, surely the seed is sown equally to all, as the sower sows it over the field : and now that the LORD of the harvest is going to send His sower to make a fresh cast, say whether the hearts upon which His seed will fall equally are not as different from each other as the four sorts of ground spoken of in the parable.

Ah, yes ; but there is no reason why they should be. Look at our own fields ; they were once like the fields of Syria, but they are so no longer. The parable is no longer applicable to our fields ; they have been reclaimed ; the rocks, and the thorns, and the hard ground have disappeared ; the seed of the sower falls upon none but good ground now, and before you can fully understand the parable, it is necessary for me to explain to you that our land was not always what you see it. Are you not ashamed to say that CHRIST’s parable has ceased to be a parable as far as your fields are concerned, but that it is as applicable as ever to your hearts ? Is not life more than meat ? and has not the God Who has given your bodies the power of reclaiming the one, given your souls also the power of reclaiming the other ? What is the grace of Baptism ?—what is the meaning of being made a member of CHRIST ?—are you going to bury *that* talent in the earth ?

I call upon you to repent, for CHRIST has given you the power of repenting. I call upon you to do works meet for repentance ; and when I do so, I call upon you



for no more than you can do, for "you can do all things through CHRIST, Who strengtheneth you."

And this brings me to the third Gospel of the season. The ambassador represents the sovereign, and is in the place of the sovereign, so far as regards that particular office which is committed to his charge. "He that heareth you heareth Me," said our LORD. CHRIST's Ambassador will be passing by, to distribute from His Master's stores committed to his stewardship, strength proportioned to your needs. Now remember the blind men who stood by the road leading to Jericho, while their LORD passed by: pray to that LORD, as they did, to open your eyes, that you may see your dangers, your past sins and consequent weaknesses; your faults, and your deficiencies. Pray to Him that you may see the hard spots in your hearts, so that you may break them up in time, and the thorns in your hearts, in order that you may remove them before they choke the good seed that will then fall upon them. Unless you see your faults, you will not be able to guard against them, or amend them, or prepare for the good seed the LORD is sending you. This is why this Gospel closes our season of self-examination. Of yourselves you know not what to cast out or what to ask for. Pray then, "LORD, open Thou mine eyes, that I may see."

Clearness of sight is peculiarly necessary when we have to look into our own faults, and peculiarly difficult to be obtained; in fact it can be obtained through CHRIST alone; it can be obtained only by prayer, and our prayers are invariably answered, "according to thy FAITH be it unto thee."

Now remember faith is not only believing that CHRIST died for your sins, but believing every thing that CHRIST said. And among the rest, believing that He can and will give you the particular thing you are asking for at this particular time.

To receive spiritual sight, therefore, you must believe as this blind man believed, that JESUS came into the world to fulfil those particular promises which declared of Him, that He should "give light to them which sat



in darkness and in the shadow of death, and guide their feet into the way of peace." To have the grace of baptism, without following it, is just as if the Israelites had stood still in the wilderness when the pillar of the cloud moved on before them, just as if the wise men, (who would not have been wise men then,) had remained in the East when the star went on before their faces, pointing the road to Bethlehem. You must believe that while you are following the guidance of your reason, you are in darkness, and all the greater darkness, because the star of your baptism and the pillar of your cloud has moved away from before you ; but that with CHRIST is Light to enlighten every one who seeks it. And towards this Light you must turn the desire of your heart, that, the eyes of your understanding being opened, "you may know the truth, and know it more abundantly : " so that God, who commandeth light to shine out of darkness, may shine in your hearts, and give "the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of JESUS CHRIST."

#### IV.

### THE SEASON OF MANHOOD.

“Before honour is humility.”—Prov. xv. 33.

You will have seen by this time that I am carrying out from the New Testament arranged by the Calendar according to the teaching of the Church, the very same lesson which I have already shadowed out from the Old Testament, in the march of the Israelites towards the promised land.

And it is quite true, that, besides the type of the Israelites in the wilderness, we do possess in the Church Calendar, from Christmas to Easter, that is to say, from the birth of CHRIST to His glorious resurrection, another and a livelier picture of a Christian's progress through this state of trial, to the blessedness of His promised land. There is, therefore, and there must be, a close resemblance between these two pictures of the same thing. In the earlier Sundays of the Calendar, we see set forth, only now much more vividly and distinctly than in the old type, the protection, and the guidance, and the grace vouchsafed us by God, before we were, I will not say deserving, for that we never are, but able to deserve it. There is the same obedience required, the same instruction imparted in the Sundays after the Epiphany, which we find in the commandments of Sinai, and in precisely the same order. In neither case is the commandment given first, and the protection vouchsafed, as a consequence of having obeyed it. In both cases alike the great deliverance is effected first, the people are adopted,

called, set forth on their journey, led by the presence of God, and all this out of God's free grace, and no deservings of their own. This is done first, the commandments are given afterwards. In the one case the pillar of the cloud, in the other CHRIST Himself, walks the road, step by step, before His people. They are expected to follow where He leads, and to receive and walk by the commandments of their God, not so much in the hope of an immediate reward, though that they will receive, as in gratitude for a deliverance already effected. "We love Him, because He *first* loved us."

I have shown you that the Exodus from Egypt, the Baptism of the Red Sea, the Pillar of the Cloud, the Commandments of Sinai, and the additional help and guidance, and protection, and means of access to God in worship afforded by the tabernacle, typify the childhood and youth of the Christian, together with his call to Confirmation, and the additional help he acquires by it. I have shown you, too, that the same season of life is pictured in the Birth of CHRIST, and the instruction of the seasons after Christmas, while Septuagesima, like Sinai, completes the course with the image of Confirmation and its consequences. I am going now to lay before you, by the Sundays in Lent, your future course,—the stern realities of manhood, the hard work of life,—the road of your duty lying through a desolate wilderness, which your Master trod, and which, as soon as He has strengthened you for your journey, you must tread after Him, if you wish ever to reach the place to which that same path has led Him.

You have longed, no doubt, as all young people do, for the time of your coming to manhood and womanhood. You have fancied it a thing to be desired; and you are right—so it is—every part of the road that leads to eternal life is a thing to be desired. You have been looking forward with hope to the greater liberty and fuller enjoyments of that state. You have done well. The liberty *is* greater, the enjoyments *are* fuller. That is to say, greater means of serving God are put in your power, and fuller enjoyments result from a consciousness of

having served Him. Thanks be to God, He has left no part of this life without its own flowers and its own fruits, which those who journey along it are free to gather.

But remember, if you increase your liberty, in the same proportion you increase your responsibility. If your enjoyments multiply, so do your temptations. Do not forget that the Old Testament typified the maturity of man—his march from Sinai to the Promised Land—by a path through a desert; or that the Christian Church points out the progress from Confirmation to a blessed resurrection by the season of Lent.

Lent has its festivals and its enjoyments, too, just as life has. The Sundays *in* Lent are not Sundays *of* Lent. They are times of rest and refreshing, like the halts in the wilderness: but for all that, the main business of life lies through the hard, stony, uninviting path of duty—the weekdays of Lent—the time of abstinence and self-denial.

I would not discourage you. I would point to the Holy Land beyond the wilderness—to Easter at the end of Lent—to the prize of your high calling in CHRIST JESUS at the end of your path of duty. But I may not deceive you into the idea that the path which I am now pointing out to you is an easy one. I may not say any thing but what my Master said of it. I must tell you that they who would come after Him must not only take up their cross, but that they must take it up *daily* to follow Him. But I will not tell you that you can enter into heaven, except through much tribulation. I will not talk to you of anything but a strait gate and a narrow road for you to travel in, for my Master has told me that, though there is a wide gate and a broad road, and many people travelling in it, yet that that gate and that road will lead you to destruction.

I *must* tell you this—or how would you believe me when I spoke to you about Confirmation? What need of strength from above if the path of your life were easy—your burthen light, and your journey safe? Willingly will I point out to you, from the Old Testament, the Rock that followed God's chosen with its refreshing

waters, and tell you from the New that that Rock was CHRIST. Willingly will I tell you of the manna in the Old Testament, and show you how "man did eat angels' food"—and then call you to the Holy Communion, and tell you that the FATHER giveth you far more than He gave the Israelites of old—that He giveth you the True Bread from heaven, of which that was but a type. I will call you to eat of it again and again, "for the journey is too much for you." I will show you how you may "go in the strength of that Meat to the mount of God." But I will not lead you to suppose, either that the wilderness of this world supplies meat for the soul, or that the journey is not hard to flesh and blood; for if I did, you might attempt it on your own strength,—if I did, you might think lightly of the nourishment which your heavenly FATHER has provided for you, and so "faint by the way," and never reach your home.

I must tell you what manhood is, and what you must expect to find it; not what you would fancy it, or wish it to be. And I will tell it you from the Church. Look at the Gospels, Epistles, and Collects of Lent, just as you would look into the guide-book of a journey you are about to take. See from them what sort of country you are going through; see what you may expect to meet with; and see what preparation you must make, and what provisions are necessary for your journey.

The First Sunday in Lent shows us mortification of the flesh through regeneration.

The Second—our spiritual weakness.

The Third—God's defence against our spiritual enemies.

The Fourth—Justification by being made one with CHRIST.

The Fifth—The grace of perseverance.

The Sixth—which brings us into Holy Week, and carries us step by step, in its variety of Gospels and Epistles, through the great and mysterious doctrines of the Atonement, teaches us voluntary conformity of our lives to the humiliation of CHRIST.

This, and none other, is your path along Lent through



Easter Eve, to the joyful morning of Easter Day. This, and none other, is your path of manhood and womanhood. Through the grave and gate of death, to a joyful resurrection, on the last Easter,<sup>1</sup> the Day of Judgment.

First Sunday.—There is a great difference, you cannot help seeing that, between the duties pointed out to us by CHRIST's example in this stage of our life, and of the Church's teaching, and those which were pointed out to us in the Sundays before Septuagesima. Those were duties towards our neighbours—obedience to the Church, obedience to our parents, considerateness, benevolence, and the like—that is to say, obvious, and therefore easy,—duties,—duties suited to the strength of young Christians. Those which are held out to us now, also from the example of our Master, are personal duties, less obvious, less supported by public opinion and the praise of man, less seen, and consequently very much more difficult. We are like the disciples, who, having performed successfully many great works in their SAVIOUR's Name, tried to cast out the devil from the young man who was brought to them during their SAVIOUR's absence, and were surprised to find themselves absolutely unable to do so. When afterwards they asked their heavenly Master, "Why could not we cast him out?" they were told that "this kind comes not out but by prayer and fasting."

The disciples, then, were young Christians, learners like yourselves, and CHRIST taught them, as the Church in His name teaches you, by putting easy things before them first. You have been told to love, honour, and succour your father and mother, to honour and obey the Queen, and all that are put in authority under her, to submit yourselves to your governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters, to order yourselves lowly and reverently to all your betters, to hurt nobody by word or deed, to bear no malice nor hatred in your hearts, to keep your hands from picking and stealing, and your tongue from evil speaking, lying, slandering.

<sup>1</sup> The word Easter is from the same root as the words East and Yeast, and like them signifies rising.

These, and many things like these, you have been told to do, which, as regenerate—as children of God—as not only disciples, but MEMBERS of CHRIST, you feel you ought to be able to do. You ought. Some you have done, like the disciples, but some you have not done, and cannot. You know that you have harder things than these before you, and you come to CHRIST, as His disciples came, with astonishment and disappointment; and you ask Him, Why cannot we cast out those bad feelings, those angry and sulky tempers? why cannot we be kind? why cannot we obey our parents? And He tells you, as He told them, that your own faith is not yet strong enough—that this kind comes not out but by prayer and fasting—that He began His own entrance into the business of His calling by prayer and fasting—and so must you.

THEN, that is to say, after His baptism, was JESUS led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Then, after your Confirmation, and because of your Confirmation, will your trials increase. You need not be afraid, your trials then will not be above your strength, but if you would withstand them as your Master withstood them, you must not reject the means by which He did it.

Personal duties the Church has purposely withheld from you, in a great measure, during the earlier part of her teaching, but she places them before you now, when you have strength to bear them. This is an intentional arrangement, in order at once to encourage you and to give you humility. You are shown that even in easy duties you fail, unless you first “purify yourselves even as He is pure,” and, when your attempt to do that opens to you duties more difficult, you find that if your trials are greater now, it is because you are able to bear greater, and perhaps, as one of the old Fathers has it, “because the devil is always more anxious for a victory over God’s Saints than over others, and therefore the greatness of your trial is in itself an encouragement, because it is the measure of your increase in holiness.”

And this brings us to the subject of the next Sunday;

“our own spiritual weakness,” and the fact that the strength in which we stand is not our own. We have not time now to enlarge on the particular instance mentioned in the Gospel of this second Sunday, sufficient is it now that I fix your attention on this one point, that of ourselves we can do nothing, that everything we do, that every advance we make, is from God and through CHRIST. And that as Moses exhorted the Israelites to do in their temporal progress, so we exhort you to do in your spiritual progress—whenever you look back with satisfaction to the conquest over any sinful feeling or habit, that you should think, not of yourselves who have gained that step in your Christian life, but of the God who gave you the power to gain it. “Thou shalt remember the LORD thy God, said Moses, for it is He that giveth thee the power to get wealth.” And wealth here means welfare as well as riches, eternal prosperity as well as temporal.

This is the Lesson of the second Sunday, and when it is well learnt, but not before, we may venture on the grand and comforting doctrine of the third Sunday—“CHRIST the defence of His faithful followers.” It would not be safe to enter upon this doctrine without fitting preparation, for a reason I will tell you presently ; it has been to many a fearful downfall ; it is a scripture which many “have wrested to their own destruction,” by crying to themselves, “Peace, where there was no peace, saith God.” Comfort before humiliation is “healing the hurt of the Lord’s people slightly,” as Jeremiah calls it—allowing the wound to heal too soon, and throwing the virulence of it into the constitution. But humiliation has its own comfort in the mean while. I will tell you this in the words of S. Chrysostom ; you must all be familiar with the name of Chrysostom, for you must at once recollect that beautiful prayer of his which closes our morning and evening services.

“Whoever thou art,” he says, “that after thy baptism (and I might add now after thy Confirmation) sufferest grievous trials, be not troubled thereat, for this thou receivedst arms to fight, and not to sit idle. God does

not hold all trial from us ; first, that we may feel that we are become stronger ; secondly, that we may not be puffed up with the greatness of the gifts we have received ; thirdly, that the devil may have experience that we have entirely renounced him ; fourthly, that we may be made stronger ; and fifthly, that we may receive a sign of the treasure entrusted to us, for the devil would not come to tempt us did he not see us advanced to greater honours."

When you have once fully realized this, and impressed it on your minds, then you may go on to the next Sunday, and see the strong man that would have made your hearts his palace cast out by One stronger than he, and the goods, that is to say your faculties, your means, your time, and your opportunities, which would have been used in his service, claimed and made His own by that Mighty King who is at once his conqueror and your defence.

## V.

### GOD'S HELP.

“Thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee the power to get wealth.”—Deut. viii. 18.

THE principal lesson taught us by the Second Sunday in Lent is our own spiritual weakness. You see that the Collect for the day begins “Almighty God, Who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves.” The first thing that strikes us here is, that this is a subject which comes round very often. This is quite true. There is no subject which the Church brings before us so often, because, strange as it may seem, there is nothing that we are so apt to forget. Whenever we are richer—whenever we are more powerful—whenever we are happier—nay, whenever we are holier and better—whenever we feel ourselves more advanced in our worship of God, or our duty to our neighbours,—the first thing that comes into our minds always is, “my might and my power hath gotten me these things.” Therefore it is that the Church is constantly sounding in our ears the warning—“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise, for Thy loving mercy and for Thy truth’s sake.”

Much as we are given to this at all times, we are more given to it when we feel that we have advanced in grace,—when we look back upon our past lives, and think that now we are better than we were at some other time,—or when we look upon our neighbours and think that we are better than they. It is the great snare of the devil



which he lays for us at those particular seasons. Whenever, therefore, the Church calls upon us for unusual exertions as a preparation of our souls and bodies for very holy seasons, she is sure to put in some caution about our real spiritual weakness. You remember, at Advent, when we were called upon to prepare for our LORD's coming on the first Sunday, we were told to go to our Bibles in the second, and to our Priests in the third; the fourth told us that all this would be of no use, unless CHRIST raised up His power and came among us, and with great might succoured us. So is it also now. If possible, Easter is a holier season than Christmas. At any rate, our preparing ourselves for Confirmation has brought more solemn subjects before our eyes, and the Church has required of us a strict examination into our own faith in all the articles of the Christian religion, and of our own consciences as to the manner in which we have acted up to their requirements.

We have been examining ourselves, and confessing our sins; perhaps we have felt ourselves forgiven. We really do feel very sorry at having offended so good a God, Who has shown Himself so ready to forgive us, and we have, during the last week, been determining to show our sorrow outwardly,—to attend the services of His Church more frequently,—to pray oftener,—to take more trouble to serve our neighbours,—to forgive any one who has injured us,—to ask forgiveness if we have injured any one: we have determined to purify our bodies by fasting, either literally from food, or figuratively from all things that draw our minds from God. We have already shown a good deal of zeal for God: many of us have attended the Lent services and the evening lectures regularly, and feel that we have profited by them. And so gracious is God, and so soon does He give us His reward, we have already begun to feel better and happier and more at ease in our consciences.

Now, says the Church, do not deceive yourselves,—do not fancy that this is your work. “You have no power of yourselves to help yourselves.” This is God's doing, not yours. You have got spiritual wealth—well and

good : keep it and persevere ; but do not forget that it was GOD Who gave you the power to get the wealth. He put into your minds these good desires,—He must enable you to bring them to good effect. These are the words of the Easter Collect.

We have in the Gospels a great instance of how the devil tempts men to their destruction by this very thing. Who prayed more than the Pharisees?—who were oftener at their religious duties?—who gave more alms?—who fasted more?—who did more these very things which you have been resolving to do for this Lent,—and doing? And what spoiled it all? One thing, and one thing only : spiritual pride. They thought that it was their own work, and therefore they were proud of themselves for it. And what did that lead them to do? To look down upon their neighbours,—to thank GOD that they were not as this publican. And what was the consequence of that? That when CHRIST came and called to them, and would have showed them the way of salvation, their own pride turned their minds from Him ; they were righteous already,—they had therefore nothing to repent of : CHRIST did not come to call the righteous but the sinners to repentance ; and though He called, their ears were dull that they should not hear, and their eyes were blind that they should not see, and their hearts waxed gross lest they should be converted and He should heal them. As the cloud which comes between the sun and the earth, cutting off from it the blessed sunshine which is beaming everywhere else, is drawn up by the very warmth and light which it chills and hides,—so spiritual pride is raised by the very warmth of our own religion as it comes between us and the Sun of Righteousness, shutting out His blessed beams from our souls, so that when we should be looking at Him, we can see nothing but the mist that has come up from ourselves. Bear this in mind all through life, and as I am now teaching you your duties as confirmed and perfect Christians from the services in Lent, so I will teach you this from the Ash Wednesday Collect, which, as you know, is repeated after every Collect in the season. Mark

these little differences in the Rubrics; you will not lose your time by studying them. The Advent Collect is repeated as well as this, but it is repeated before the Collect for the day, because the Advent Collect calls upon us to prepare, and the Sunday Collect shows you the different ways of preparing; but it is not so now: the Rubric now tells us that it comes in after the Sunday Collect, and the reason is that this Collect is perpetually reminding us of our weakness; it is like that petition which we put up whenever we hear the commandments, which is not, Thank God, for enabling us to keep them, but, LORD, have mercy upon us for breaking them, and incline our hearts to keep them better for the future. In the first Collect that is read with the Ash Wednesday Collect we pray for charity; the next Sunday we pray for grace to use abstinence, so that the SPIRIT may lead us into righteousness and true holiness; the next we pray for defence from the dangers that beset us; and so on through Lent; and when we come to the Confirmation Collect, we pray for the manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and the spirit of holy fear. Now, lest we should be lifted up by the fancy that we have charity, and that we have righteousness and true holiness, that we have ghostly strength and holy fear, and all those things that we pray for, and that therefore we have a right to be defended from all our enemies (for it is quite true those who are doing their best during this Lent towards getting those things *are* more charitable, more righteous, more holy, more prudent, more careful, and more wise than they were),—but lest they should be lifted up by this, the Ash Wednesday Collect comes in continually, telling us not to rejoice that we are so much better and purer than we were, but to lament that we ever were so sinful as we used to be,—so that lamenting our sins worthily—that is to say, as they ought to be lamented—and acknowledging our wretchedness, we may at some future time obtain *perfect* remission, for the remission we *have* obtained on confessing our sins is not

perfect. There is but one Baptism for the remission of sins; it is conditional—that is to say, we are forgiven if we worthily lament and do for the future works meet for repentance.

Now it behoves us to bear this in mind all through our preparation for the Easter Communion, for this, as I have told you all along, is the type of our resurrection with CHRIST, and I am saying this, as to all, so more especially to those who are starting in life, and, being firmly determined to follow their Master's steps through it, are seeking, at the hands of His servant the Bishop, strength to enable them to fulfil their determination. To them I say more particularly, though you are doing your very best,—though you feel, as you will feel when strengthened by God's grace, that these things are easier than they were,—do not forget that you are fortifying yourselves with God's strength, not your own. Do not think, I come to Church regularly twice every Sunday, and very often in the week besides; I have given up such and such enjoyments and amusements, because I am preparing for Confirmation, and because it is Lent; I have forgiven So-and-so, who did not deserve it: thank God that I am so much better than such and such of my neighbours, who, so far from going to Church on a week-day, very seldom go to Church at all. Now, I tell you fairly, that if you go on in this way, so far from coming to that Holy Communion worthily, you will be all the worse for your Lent preparations; you will be just like the Pharisees we have been speaking of,—you will be just like those people that Isaiah speaks of,—for you will fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. All that your fasting will do will be to be leading you to look down upon other people, and leading them to think of you as of proud, and conceited, and self-righteous men, who set up themselves above their neighbours; and thus, if by their fruits you are to judge of works, all that these works of real piety will have produced in you will be a mass of bad feelings, and that not because you will have done any one thing wrong, but that you did not give God the praise. If the devil



lead you into such a snare as this, there is but one way in which you can be saved, and that is the way in which our LORD saved S. Peter,—by His permitting your own confidence in your own strength to lead you into some great and glaring and open sin, showing you what your self-trust has really brought you to, and that, so far from being better than your neighbours, you are really worse. Thus, by inducing you to begin again your Christian course with a better guide than your own will, He may at last save you, but not otherwise.

I will tell you what that Ash-Wednesday Collect following upon the Sunday Collect will teach you, and if you go by that, you will soon attain to real strength. You go to Church now very much oftener than you did,—pray to God to forgive you for going so seldom before; you “fast twice in the week” (that is to say, you give up your will to God’s will),—pray that He would forgive you for having followed your own will before; you have forgiven your enemy,—pray God to forget that it might be some secret fault of yours that made him your enemy at first; you have asked forgiveness of some one whom you have offended,—pray to God to forgive you for ever having thought of offending him; you cannot but see that you have advanced from that wickedness in which both you and your neighbour were lying, and that *now* you are better than he,—give God the praise; ask yourselves what God could have seen in you to give you such good thoughts, and show your thankfulness by trying to put them into your neighbour’s mind also; and if he harden himself against you, do not be angry and speak slightly and contemptuously of him,—remember how you used to harden yourself against God. And, above all things, do not say, I am so much better than I was, that I shall go on and get better and better all my life; I mean to do this, I will do that, I do not care about such and such a temptation now, though the time was when I once could not stand it. This is another snare of the devil,—this is another form of spiritual pride,—this is not trusting in the strength of our blessed SAVIOUR; it is trusting in your own strength,



and will in the end as surely fail you, as it is true that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Fear always. Whenever a man ceases to fear, then he begins to be in danger. Fear always, and yet trust; your very fear will make you trust the more, will lead you always to look to CHRIST, so that when He rebukes your too great confidence in yourself, and, like S. Peter, you begin to sink, you at once cry out to Him and lay hold upon Him, and He places you again in safety.

## VI.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S NOURISHMENT.

“When JESUS then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”—S. John vi. 5.

THE Lesson that we learn from Mid-Lent Sunday is the Holy Communion, a type of our justification in CHRIST. And this is a doctrine that is not brought upon minds unprepared and unfitted to receive it, for like most other true doctrines of the Bible, it may well, if taken singly, become a dangerous downfall to us; but we are led to it step after step, and these steps are the doctrines of the Sundays preceding. I am tracing out the life of the Christian man, as opposed to the young or imperfect Christian, from the Sundays in Lent, and I have shown you that, in preparation for that perilous journey through the wilderness of life, we are told to purify ourselves, we are shown our own spiritual weakness, we are assured that God can and will defend us in all spiritual dangers. These are the three steps by which we have, during the last three Sundays, been led to our position to-day; and on reflecting on these three doctrines, we are brought to ask: God can defend us, no doubt, from all dangers, ghostly and bodily, and from our spiritual enemy; but what is there in man that the God of heaven should vouchsafe to defend him? The answer to this comes in this Sunday, and is this:—True, of ourselves, we are of no value, but we are united to CHRIST, we are members of CHRIST, and it is by being members of Him that we do become of value in the sight of God, and are thus

forgiven. We are of value as being parts of CHRIST, and are therefore worthy of being defended ; or, to use the words of the Collect, “ though for our evil deeds we do worthily deserve to be punished, yet we are mercifully relieved by God’s grace, through our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.”

I mentioned in my last Sermon an arrangement in the services, by which, notwithstanding the high doctrines of our own purity, God’s defence and God’s forgiveness, that we are going to treat about, a sense of our own spiritual weakness is always kept before our eyes. I mean the constant repetition of the Ash-Wednesday Collect. I will now mention another, by which, notwithstanding the humiliation and self-abasement enjoined throughout the whole of this season, the hope of God’s forgiveness through CHRIST is never suffered to depart from us. Were I to ask any one of you how many days there are in Lent, you would answer me, forty. And you would answer rightly ; and yet if you take your Prayer Books and calculate, you will find that the six weeks of Lent multiplied by seven, to bring them into days, will give forty-two, and that if you add to this Ash-Wednesday, and the three days following, it will make forty-six. How do we account for the six days too many ? They are the six Sundays, which, though occurring in Lent, are not of, or belonging to Lent. If you look at your Prayer Books, you will find that this is not called the fourth Sunday of Lent, but the fourth Sunday in Lent. Now what lesson do we learn from that ? The Sunday is the weekly commemoration of our LORD’s Resurrection in our Body : that is to say, a weekly proof that our human nature, which had been condemned to death in Adam, who died, has been forgiven in CHRIST, Who raised it in Himself from the dead. This weekly festival, therefore, coming in constantly during the sad and heavy season of Lent, reminds us, as often as it comes round, that we should not sorrow as men without hope ; that though we are what we acknowledge ourselves in the general collect, wretched, yet that we, the baptized, cannot be so, utterly and

hopelessly, because forgiveness, proved by the resurrection of the body, is one of the three promises we have received at Baptism.

We will go on to show, from the Gospel of the day, that this forgiveness is due to our being one with CHRIST, and CHRIST with us; or, to use the words of the Catechism, to our being members of CHRIST.

At first sight, the Gospel of the fourth Sunday in Lent seems but the simple narrative of a very wonderful miracle, the feeding of five thousand people with five loaves; but while we read it, one thing must needs strike us, how is it that the Church has selected this portion of Scripture for two different Gospels, Mid-Lent Sunday, and the last Sunday after Trinity; both of them remarkable Sundays, and both of them, by a special provision of the Church, sure to be read every year. This happens to no other portion of the whole Bible, why is it done in this case? The reason is, that this parable has two meanings, one literal and one spiritual; and both of these of the highest importance. The literal sense we took on the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity, when we saw the whole world anxiously looking out for the Advent of their SAVIOUR, the prophet, whom Moses had predicted should be raised up from among the Jews, like unto himself. We saw the Jews, though mistaking the meaning of much of our LORD's teaching, and many of His miracles, yet struck at once by the resemblance shown in this miracle to Moses feeding the people in the wilderness with bread from heaven, that they cried out with one accord, "Of a truth, this is that Prophet that should come into the world." Now this is its literal meaning, and in that sense it comes in admirably before the Sundays of Advent, which show the coming of CHRIST in the flesh. But it has also a typical and spiritual meaning, and as such, comes in no less admirably before the great festival of the Resurrection, when all our hopes of happiness depend upon our being in communion with Him Who is our Head. The Church would not be warranted in putting a typical meaning upon it on her own authority, but we take it from the com-

ments of our Blessed SAVIOUR Himself, which you will find in the concluding part of the same chapter, and which I should recommend you all to study closely this evening.

We will first look at the type. A number of people who had followed JESUS from different cities, and who had been listening to His teaching, found themselves to have been led by Him into a desert place, where they had nothing to eat, and where there was every prospect that they would faint by the way if they attempted to journey back in their own strength. Their blessed LORD, seeing this, had compassion on them. Taking a very small and apparently insufficient portion of bread, He gives it to His disciples; and on their distributing it to the multitude, it is found to be quite sufficient for all their wants.

Now what does that typify, but ourselves, who have, according to the teaching of the Church, been following, ever since Christmas, the steps of our LORD and SAVIOUR, and listening to His teaching? We find that this has led us into the wilderness,—that we are unable of ourselves to help ourselves,—and that the journey is too hard for us, and we stand every chance of fainting by the way. Our LORD, seeing this, and having compassion on us, takes a very small portion of bread and wine—a means altogether insufficient to work such great works—distributes to His disciples the Ministers; they set it before the multitude, who eat and are filled, and return to their homes, strengthened for all necessary work in CHRIST. Nay, we might even carry on the parable, and talk of gathering up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost, distributing them to the communicants afterwards, and eating and drinking them reverently in the Church; but that would lead us away from our main subject, which is, the parable of the Five Loaves typical of the blessed Communion, whereby we are received by CHRIST, reconciled to Him, and having had that renewed by the HOLY GHOST which had been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by our own carnal will and frailness, we are preserved and con-



tinued in the unity of the Church, and are gifted with fresh strength for the continuance of our spiritual journey. This is the other lesson that we learn from this miracle, and this is the reason why, besides forming part of our preparation for the doctrine of CHRIST as Man in Christmas, it is also part of our preparation for the doctrine of CHRIST as God in Easter.

Now, what warrant have we for putting this spiritual interpretation on a plain narrative? In this first place, the Church evidently takes it in this sense when she couples it with a collect confessing our unworthiness, and yet praying for relief. In its literal sense, the Gospel has nothing to do with that, but in its spiritual sense everything. It is the claiming of one of the three promises God has made us in our Baptism—that we should be considered parts of CHRIST, and strengthened by His SPIRIT.

But, in the second place, we have CHRIST's own words to show that He meant us to consider the miracle in this light. "When He had returned to the western side of the sea, and still found the same people following Him and seeking Him, He warned them to look for a spiritual meaning in what He had done." This had become quite necessary, because so thoroughly were they impressed with the idea that the great Prophet they had acknowledged was a temporal restorer of their country and nation, that, immediately after the performance of this miracle, Jesus had been obliged to leave them to prevent their taking Him forcibly and making Him a king. The very first words He speaks therefore, on seeing them again, are a caution that there is something in all this of a nature far more spiritual than they seemed to have any idea of. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give you." They say unto Him, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" JESUS tells them that they must believe on Him Whom God had sent. They are yet doubtful, and return to the manna in the wilderness, not quite certain in their minds whether,

after all, this was so great a miracle as that of Moses, inasmuch as the bread did not in this case come down from heaven. But He said, evidently regarding the whole transaction in its spiritual sense, "I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. You have far higher privileges than your fathers: they did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead, whereas of this Bread a man may eat and not die; and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

There are many lights in which we may profitably regard the Holy Communion. We may speak of it as an act of duty, as an act of obedience, or, higher still, as an act of remembrance, or, again higher, as a means of grace—as a means whereby we are strengthened; but the doctrine of this day seems to place it in the very highest and most spiritual position in which it can be viewed—as a means whereby we partake of the nature of CHRIST. We have no right to forgiveness, we have no right to defence, we have no right to anything at God's hands for our own sakes; and the more we examine our obedience by the rule of God's Commandments, and our Faith by the articles of the Apostles' Creed, the better we shall be convinced of this. We have no right to expect or hope for any of these things for ourselves; how, then, can we hope for them? By drawing near to CHRIST, by being made one with Him, by being in communion with Him, and being considered by God as part of that beloved Son in Whom He is well pleased. We are justified—that is to say, considered just, good, righteous—yet we are not so; how is this, except by being considered belonging to One Who Himself is just, good, and righteous? Well might our SAVIOUR say, "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." How indeed can we? We have no life in ourselves; in whom have we life except in Him? and how can we have life in Him except in the way in which He has given it us? Why should we try to seek it in any other

way? And what is that way? Our SAVIOUR Himself shall tell you :—

“Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day : for My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed.” “He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him.” “As the living FATHER hath sent Me, and I live by the FATHER, so he that eateth Me shall live by Me.”

Is not this a plain, downright, open promise, that though we can do nothing of ourselves to help ourselves, yet there is help for us? Is not the means of this help clearly and distinctly pointed out? “Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood shall live for ever.” Is not the reason why it must be so set forth as clearly and as distinctly, because “He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him,”—because such a person is considered by GOD actually part of His holy and just and righteous SON, and is treated accordingly—insomuch that, as the SON lives by the FATHER, so we who thus become part of the SON shall live by Him.

Is not this indeed the bread that came down from heaven? Is it not so in a far higher sense than the manna of which our fathers ate? That was indeed a type of this : that preserved them alive through all their wanderings in the desert, which typifies this life to the Christian ; in the barren and desolate regions it sustained their life, and gave them strength to reach the promised land, which to us typifies heaven. But, after all, it was but a type : “Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead.” This is the reality, of which that was merely the shadow,—this is the true bread from heaven, he that eateth of which shall live for ever.

The Communion of this Sunday is the last Communion from which you will be excluded. Before we again meet at the Table of our LORD, you will have received your mission in life, and will have been endued with strength to perform it. The next call to spiritual food

and nourishment will be made to you as perfected Christians—that is to say, as Christians entitled to the full privileges of your calling. See that you do not neglect it. You cannot work in the strength of your SAVIOUR unless you are united to Him, nor can you plead His righteousness and His merits, and the atonement which He has made for your sins and your shortcomings, unless He is “in you and you in Him.”

# SPECIAL LECTURES

## On Matters of Conscience,

ADDRESSED TO THE CATECHUMENS AND THEIR SPONSORS  
IN THE SCHOOL-ROOM OR IN THE CHURCH, ON WEEK-  
DAY EVENINGS : TOGETHER WITH QUESTIONS FOR SELF-  
EXAMINATION ON MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE.<sup>1</sup>

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### LECTURE I.

You will remember that when we considered the covenant of grace, we found one part of it to consist of faith and obedience<sup>2</sup>—two qualities which we separate for convenience of description, but which in practice cannot really be separated at all. For, in fact, we obey God because we believe Him ; and we should not obey if we did not believe. On this necessary union of works and faith I need not enlarge to-day—not only because I

<sup>1</sup> The Parson must remember that these are not intended as catechetical questions, but as helps to self-examination. They should be read to the Catechumens as part of the Lecture, and then given them as a guide to their own meditations.

In practice these generally do form the subjects of subsequent conversations, not only between the Parson and his Catechumens, but also between the Parson and the Sponsors. Still, it will be better that the subject should be started by the Catechumen himself, who will generally come of his own accord for assistance or explanation. Conscience should not be treated with the rough hand with which we treat intellect. Some of course there will always be who will take no trouble about the matter, but upon characters like this there is little hope of making impression at all.

<sup>2</sup> See Sermon No. I.



have read much to you out of the Homilies about it, but because I spoke of it last Sunday, when I explained the difference between a lively faith and a dead faith, showing you that the latter is a belief in any fact, such as a fact in history, or a fact in geography, or a fact in natural philosophy, which does not concern you at all, and by which your own conduct is by no means affected; while the former is that which so far concerns you, that not only you think it true, but, on account of your thinking so, you act differently from the way in which you would have acted did you not think it true. Now, this change of conduct on account of your faith we call obedience, and sometimes duty, and sometimes also works. The Homilies call them works which spring out of a lively faith.

To ascertain whether our works do spring out of a lively faith, we are told to try ourselves by the rule of God's commandments. This at once tries our works and our faith—our belief in the God Who gave the commandments, and the effect that belief has produced upon our conduct. And this is the way we are told to prepare ourselves for the Communion, because the Communion is a test to our own consciences of our state towards God—it is a type of heaven. To this Communion, and consequently to heaven, we might be admissible, in two ways, either by never having broken God's commandments, or from having been forgiven the breaking of them for CHRIST's sake; and we must remember that when we judge ourselves and pronounce that we are unfit for the Communion because we have broken God's commandments, and also unfit because God has not, even for CHRIST's sake, forgiven us, we are pronouncing our own condemnation: we say that we have sinned, and that God has not forgiven us, and that we are in a state of damnation. I can understand a man's conscience keeping him from the Holy Communion, but I cannot understand that man having a moment's peace while it does so; because in pronouncing himself unfit and too bad to be forgiven, he has himself condemned himself to hell.

I will now place your duty before you by putting direct questions to your consciences—dividing them according to God's commandments. This is your preparation for the Communion, and this is your preparation for heaven. Your conscience must acquit you as you hear and reflect upon the questions, or, you must have repented and been forgiven for CHRIST's sake; or, you must be cast out when you die from the presence of God. It is for you to determine in which of these three states you now are.

I will begin with a few preliminary questions on the authority of the Commandments, and our peculiar reasons as Christians for obeying them.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

1. Have I well considered the peculiar circumstances under which God's chosen people of old received the Commandments—that it was just after they had been saved by a Great Deliverer from the house of their bondage and from the hand of their oppressor, and placed in safety and in freedom by their baptism in the Red Sea?

2. Have I remembered that I was myself once under a more grievous bondage—in the hands of a harder taskmaster; that I was saved by a Great Deliverer, and that God did not require of me obedience to His Commandments till He had first placed me also in safety and freedom by the water of baptism?

3. Have I remembered that if obedience, as a proof of thankfulness, was required of the Israelite, still more is it required of me the Christian?

4. Have I remembered that God required obedience of the Israelites because they were His people, and that He was their God; and that I therefore should glorify God with my body and my spirit for the very same reason: because I was made His child, and because I was bought for a price.

5. Have I always considered that the Commandments are the laws of Him Who shall judge me; and that I

must stand one day face to face with Him Who gave them, to be judged according to the deeds done in the body?

6. Have I always considered that these Commandments were the very laws I promised to obey when I was first made a member of CHRIST? Have I always then borne in mind that by breaking my own part of the promise, I run a risk of being cut off from Him?

7. Have I considered that each commandment is addressed to me in particular, not to me in common with others; that it is, *Thou* shalt not do this or that? Have I always borne this in mind, or have I proved that I did not, by excusing myself under the plea that I was not much worse than my neighbours?

8. If I have remembered the similarity between my condition and that of the Israelite, have I also remembered the great difference that is between us? That though God required a specific service from him, yet in my case He has left it to my own sense of gratitude to determine the amount of my own duty—"if ye love Me, keep My commandments?" Have I then by doing little, proved to Him and to myself that I have little thankfulness and little love?

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## LECTURE II.

### THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

WE are all of us, I trust, by this time seriously preparing ourselves for the great Communion of Easter. We are, I hope, examining the state of our own souls, and trying how far we are fit to join the Communion of Saints at the resurrection, of which this Communion at Easter is the type and remembrancer; we are seeing what in us has been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, and what by our own carnal will and frailness,

and have begun to pray God to renew these things in us by the grace of the HOLY GHOST.

You know that we can never dare even to pray to God upon our own merits, much less ask Him for His very greatest blessing, the Body and Blood of our LORD and SAVIOUR. That when we come to Him at all, we come to Him but as forgiven sinners, and ask Him to open our lips, that our mouths may show forth His praise, only after having recounted our sins in the general confession, and received His gracious pardon in the absolution.

I have frequently told you that God does not forgive our sins only because in a general way, and, as a matter of course, we say, forgive us our sins, and call ourselves miserable offenders; but that He requires us first to think over what particular sins we have been committing, and then by thinking of those sins when we repeat the General Confession, to make it our own particular private confession, and that in the Absolution God sends by His Ambassador forgiveness of those sins which we have thus confessed.

When we know how deceitful the heart is, there is great danger, lest we deceive ourselves, and miss some sins that we have committed, and thus lose God's forgiveness for them, which is granted, as you know, only to confessed and repented sins.

And if there is a danger of this in our every-day services, and a fear lest our prayers be not heard, because we have still about us some unforgiven sin; how much greater a fear ought we to have, lest we misuse the Body and Blood of CHRIST, which you know from the Catechism, is verily and indeed taken and received by all, but which is received unto salvation by the faithful only in the LORD's Supper. It is very possible that one sin forgotten by us, but remembered by God, may be the means not only of depriving us of the strengthening and refreshing of our souls for a whole month, but of turning to our destruction that grace which we have received.

How then, you will say, are we ever sure? What can we do to remember all our sins?

Whenever you are in doubt about spiritual affairs, the best thing you can do is to see whether the Church does not give you some advice, and if she does, to follow it at once. You may depend upon it, that which has been done for many hundred years, and was very likely done by the Apostles themselves, and by those that were taught by them, is most likely to be right. Now the Church says, the way and means thereto, is first to examine your lives and conversation by the rule of God's commandments. And this is natural enough. Though the whole Bible is God's word, yet the Commandments and the LORD's Prayer are more particularly so, because they came directly from Him ; just as though this whole Church is holy because God has chosen to put His name here, and call it His house, yet the chancel is the most holy, because His Commandments are proclaimed from it, and the strengthening of our souls by His Body and Blood is there imparted to us.

The Commandments, then, are the rule of our life, because they are God's word, and consequently our departing from them is the measure of our sin. Let us, therefore, take them one by one, and examine them. David tells us that they are exceeding broad ; that is, they mean much more than they say. We will examine them therefore closely, and that we may do this the better, and think upon it after we have done it, we will take but one for each evening.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

THOU SHALT HAVE NONE OTHER GODS BUT ME.

1. Have I considered that God is at once the wisdom, the justice, and the goodness of the universe. Have I then always felt a thankfulness under His corrections, a patience and resignation under His dispensations, and a constant desire and wish to obey Him ; that is to say, have I always considered Him *as my God* ?

2. Can I remember having ever set up any other gods in my heart, though I might have been ashamed



to set up these stumbling-blocks of my iniquity before my face ; for instance—

3. Can I remember ever having made self-will my God, by persevering in a course of conduct which my conscience disapproved, or by following my own crude notions of what I should wish His word to mean, rather than the interpretations received from the foundation of the Church He gave me ; or by following teachers of my own choosing rather than taking those which God has provided for me ?

4. Can I remember that I ever made pleasure my God, by attending to, and following after it, when I ought to have been attending to, and following my duty to God.

5. Have I ever made mammon my God, by attending so closely to what I called my business, so as to allow this to interfere with my real business, my duty to God. Have I always sought *first* the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, faithfully trusting that all these things would be added to me ?

6. Have I ever made pride my God, by valuing myself and my own deeds above those of other men ; thus secretly in my heart trusting in my own work for salvation, and despising those of others ?

7. Have I ever made any created thing my God, by setting my affections so strongly upon it, as to neglect my duty for it while it was present with me ; or by forgetting my faith and trustfulness, and murmuring when it was taken away.

8. If I can remember having at any time of my life failed in any of these points, then surely I have broken the First Commandment, and not loved the LORD my God with all my heart. Let me turn to Him in penitence, and pray that for CHRIST's sake He would blot out that sin.

9. If, on the other hand, my conscience does not accuse me in any of these points, let me first pray that God would enlighten it, and that my heart deceive me not. And then let me thank Him with my whole heart, that the HOLY GHOST, which was shed upon me at my

baptism, has not as yet been withdrawn, but has so effectually helped me, that I have worshipped God with my whole heart.

*This to be repeated at the end of the Questions upon every Commandment :*

When I have sufficiently thought of these things, let me pray that the LORD would have mercy upon me for any breaking of this Commandment in my life past, and that for the rest of my life He would incline my heart to keep this law.

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### LECTURE III.

#### THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

THE First Commandment has taught me to worship God with all my heart, mind, and soul ; but as GOD made our bodies as well as our souls—as CHRIST will raise again our bodies as well as our souls—as the HOLY GHOST makes our bodies His dwelling-place, as well as puts good thoughts into our souls,—our worship cannot be considered perfect unless that body also take part in it.

It is a very great mistake to think that, if we say our prayers, it matters very little how we say them or where we say them. Everything that God has made must worship Him by doing the duty for which it was made. Things without sense do : the sun runs its appointed course, and gives us light and darkness and winter and summer ; the moon gives us the regular tides ; the birds and beasts each do their appointed work in preventing any particular created thing from increasing so much upon us as to do us hurt. All these serve God in their own stations,—surely, then, our bodies should do the same. If God has given us a tongue, it should praise Him : if He has given us knees, they should bow before Him. He does not say that they shall not do their

work by being employed in our own service ; what He does say is, that that work is to be sanctified by dedicating some portion of it to Himself.

This Commandment teaches us that there are certain things to be revered, because God has separated them to Himself. Bishop Ken, in his "Practice of Divine Love," says, when speaking of this Commandment, "O my God ! for Thy dearest sake give me grace to pay a religious and suitable veneration to all sacred persons, or places, or things, which are Thine by solemn dedication, and separated for the uses of Divine love and the communications of Thy grace, or which may promote the order of Thy worship, or the edification of faithful people." And this is evident enough from the Commandment itself. If we are not to bow down to and outwardly reverence anything that is false, it follows that we are to bow down and outwardly reverence anything that is true. The warning of this Commandment is very singular, and very well worthy of attention ; and that is, that the punishment due upon our breaking it falls upon our children unto the third and fourth generation. Now, one reason of that is, that when we fail to worship God as we ought inwardly, or with our souls—that is to say, break the First Commandment—we hurt ourselves no doubt, and are punished ourselves ; but forasmuch as it is inwardly, and that people do not see it, we do not thereby set a bad example, and thus we hurt no one but ourselves. When, on the other hand, we break the Second Commandment, which relates more to bodily worship, which other people can see, and when we outwardly offend, either by bowing down to what we ought not, or by not bowing down to what we ought, then we set a bad example to others, especially our children, who, trained up by our outward irreverence and breaking of the Second Commandment with the body, soon learn to be irreverent inwardly, and forget to worship God with their soul. Thus they are punished even to the third and fourth generation, for their own sins no doubt, but the habits which taught them those sins they learnt of us.

We have now and then an instance of a child misbehaving himself at Church ; can we not trace that to the example before that child's eyes of grown up men and women sitting at their ease, and sometimes putting themselves into unseemly postures, when they ought to be bowing down and worshipping. There are from fifteen to twenty children who come to Church every morning and kneel in the chancel ; I have a good many round me at this moment ; I never saw one of them misbehave themselves. They certainly are worshipping God with their bodies outwardly, and I believe they are worshipping Him inwardly in their souls also. And why is that ? Because they see every one about them doing the same thing, and therefore they get the habit of it. Do not be selfish,—do not say this posture does very well for *me*, *I* can pray so very well ; recollect the influence your outward behaviour has upon others, and fear to show the appearance of disrespect to God, even though you really do respect Him ; not only that you should not be punished yourselves, but that your children should not suffer for it in the third and fourth generation. I admit that, in our high-walled pews, it is very difficult to put ourselves into a proper kneeling position, but difficult is one thing, and impossible is another, and the attempt is worth the making, were it only for our example and the teaching of our children. I will go on with the questions, which I hope you will think about between this and our next evening lecture.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

THOU SHALT NOT MAKE TO THYSELF ANY GRAVEN IMAGE, NOR THE LIKENESS OF ANY THING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH. THOU SHALT NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM, NOR WORSHIP THEM : FOR I THE LORD THY GOD AM A JEALOUS GOD, AND VISIT THE SINS OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN, UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME, AND SHOW



MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS IN THEM THAT LOVE ME, AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

1. Since, as man, I consist of a visible body as well as of an invisible soul, and both belong to God, if my conscience does not accuse me of forsaking God in my soul, have I always been equally ready to pay Him His due reverence with my body?

2. Have I always revered the House of God because it is the place where He has chosen to put His Name?—the Priest of my own parish, because He chose him to be His Ambassador and representative to me?—the font, because He made it to me as the river Jordan or the pool of Siloam, to wash away the leprosy of my sin?—the Holy Table, because He appointed it as the place where my soul is strengthened and refreshed by His Body and Blood?

3. Have I ever dishonoured these places by careless, irreverent, unbecoming outward behaviour, or the Minister whom He has chosen, by inconsiderate and foolish remarks on his teaching, or by holding him as an instructor whom I may criticise, rather than as a messenger of God whom I must esteem for the sake of Him Who sent him; or by regarding the sermon, which is the teaching of man, above the lessons, and prayers, and psalms, which are the worship of God?

4. Have I reflected on the severity of the temporal punishment which God inflicted on the nation of Israel for sins relating to the outward worship of God? Have I compared them with those He has inflicted on this country, and has this made me careful for my own part to keep closely and literally to the outward forms of worship appointed by my Church?

5. Have I always bowed down myself before Him Whom I worshipped as my God, meekly kneeling on my knees in prayer, and thereby showing outwardly and visibly the difference I make in my heart between Him and all created things?

6. Have I always been sufficiently thankful that God has removed from me the temptation to bow down to



images or pictures either of Himself or of any of His creatures,—that He has turned my heart from all desire of giving to any of His saints the honour due to Him alone, and removed the custom of it from the land wherein I was born? Do I show my thankfulness by my charitable feelings and expressions towards those who have not enjoyed the same advantages that I have?

7. If in thankfulness for these mercies I can say in my heart that I have never fallen into the sins of irreverence and profanity, may I be sufficiently grateful that in the devotion of my body to His service, God has given me so great a safeguard for the devotion of my soul.

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## LECTURE IV.

### THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

THERE is one general rule that will help us better than anything else to try ourselves whether we are in the habit of keeping the first four Commandments, and that is, to ask ourselves whether we remember God always?—whether He is present with us in our thoughts, whatever we do? If we get ourselves into the habit of setting Him before us, the Psalmist tells us that we shall never fall. And why is that? Let us imagine the case of an earthly master: suppose our master were always standing over us in our work,—I am afraid most people must admit that work would be better done: suppose we were looking over a gentleman's house,—should we not behave in a quieter and more respectful manner if the master of the house were himself showing it to us?—or again, when we speak of a man in his absence, do we always speak of him in the same respectful terms that we should use if we were speaking before him? Now this will give us a clear idea of the first, second, and third Commandments. We shall understand that we offend God when we do not worship Him with our

souls, and when we do not worship Him with our bodies, and when we do not worship Him with our voices, and that all for the same reason,—because we do not remember Him—we do not think Him present. Careless behaviour at church, and speaking lightly and irreverently of sacred things, are but two signs of this forgetfulness, which is so offensive to God, and you may easily convince yourselves of it. Picture to yourselves JESUS CHRIST standing before you and looking at you when you are lounging about or laughing in church; fancy Him listening to you when you are making light of His holy Name, or anything that He has set apart for Himself, such as His Church, His Book, His Ministers, and then ask yourselves, would you under those circumstances do what you are now doing? And this, too, will show you the reason why these things are so displeasing to God. You know well enough that without faith it is impossible to please Him. There is no saying so common in your mouths as this. Many people say that faith in CHRIST is the one thing necessary,—the sign of standing or falling,—and so it is. But what is faith? These people do not consider that. How can men have faith who have been told that where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there is their LORD in the midst of them, and yet, when two or three *are* gathered together in His Name, behave as they certainly would never behave if they saw Him? Or how have they faith who use His holy Name and His Word lightly and irreverently, and in a manner in which they certainly would not use it if they saw Him listening? If they behave as they would not behave in His presence, is not this a proof to themselves and their neighbours that they do not believe that He is present, or, in other words, that they do not believe what He says? and it they do not believe what He says, how have they faith? What is faith, if that is not?—and without faith, as they all know, it is impossible to please God. This, therefore, is the way in which we must regard taking God's Name in vain; whether we do it by calling Him to witness to an oath or a promise which we do not keep, or

whether we do it by not honouring His holy Name or His Word, in whatever way it is done, the sin is the same,—it is a proof of want of faith. It may be done in thoughtlessness, you may say; true, so it may, and if repented immediately and deeply the sin is not so bad; but then it proves that, at that time at least, we were not thinking of God,—that at all events God was not in all our thoughts. Now let us see what an irreverent habit proves: is it not that God is not in any of our thoughts,—that we have let our minds go so far from Him that we are unable to think of Him at all? Surely this must be a dangerous state, and the sooner we examine into it the better. We will suppose that we have satisfied our consciences with respect to the first and second Commandments,—the worshipping of God with our souls and with our bodies,—either by convincing ourselves that our own watchfulness and our diligent use of God's grace has kept us from breaking them, or that we have confessed and deeply lamented the commission of those sins,—let us therefore advance one step in our examination, and prove our faith by another test.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN: FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTLESS THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN.

1. I have examined myself thus far, and I am thankful that my conscience does not reproach me with want of love to God in my soul, or want of reverence to Him in my body. Am I as clear from the sin of want of reverence to His Name?

2. In taking any customary oaths, whether before magistrates or other authorized persons, have I always at the time remembered with reverence the great God Whose Name was on my lips? or did I consider the oath part of the necessary and common routine of duty?

3. I trust I have never taken a false oath; but have

I ever kept back part of the truth, or evaded what is called the letter of the law?

4. Have I ever been contented with what is called keeping an oath in the spirit—that is, keeping as much of it as suits me—when I had the power of keeping it to the letter?

5. Have I reflected that a promise made in the presence of God is in fact an oath? Have I always remembered the sanctity thus thrown on my own promises to God, whether at my Baptism or at Confirmation, or privately when approaching the Lord's Table, or in Matrimony, or in Ordination, or in any other matter?

6. When therefore, startled by some particular sin I had been committing, I promised before God repentance and amendment of life, have I always taken care that these promises were not made rashly and without consideration, and that they were remembered afterwards as a means whereby according as they are kept, God's Name is glorified or taken in vain?

7. I have not fallen into that foolish and wicked custom of society by which God's Name is taken in vain, commonly called swearing; but have I been equally careful about lightly making mention of Him, or anything sanctified to Him, such as His House, His Ministers, His Service, His Word and Sacraments?

8. Have I ever quoted the Bible in light conversation, or alluded to passages of it lightly or in reference to trivial or laughable subjects?

9. If at any time I have been made aware of having committed any of these things, have I at the time sufficiently laid to heart what was meant by God not holding me guiltless? Have I worthily lamented my great sin, and besought forgiveness through His Son?

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## LECTURE V.

## THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

OF course you remember S. Peter's vision of the sheet let down from heaven that was filled with all sorts of animals, which S. Peter, who was then fasting, was told to take and eat of. You remember how he hesitated about it because some of them were what was then called unclean, that is, forbidden; and how God's own voice told him that he must not consider common or unclean that which God Himself had sanctified. No doubt this was meant to show S. Peter that the Jews were God's elect, only because God had been pleased to elect them, and that whatever He chose to call by His Name would become holy for that very reason, and therefore must not be called common.

But this vision has a somewhat wider interpretation. Not only whatever people He has chosen, but also whatever things He has chosen, are more peculiarly His, and therefore holier than other things. We had some experience of this last Wednesday, when we saw that the reason why we ought to reverence the Name of God was that He had chosen it to be His Name. So it is with the Sabbath-day. It is holier than other days only because God has chosen it from other days and called it His. This is another instance of the general rule. Every thing that God has put His mark on, every thing that He has set apart for His own, His word, His ordinances, His house, His people, become to us things which God has cleansed, and which we must not call common. "There is just the same sort of difference between them and common things, as there is between a garden and the open downs. No one would think of riding over a garden lawn, and trampling down the flowers; but in riding along any of our roads, no one would feel the least scruple about riding on the turf at the side. Just



the same difference as there is between that open ground and a cultivated garden is there also between worldly days, worldly books, worldly names, and worldly people, and God's day, God's Name, God's Book, and God's people. The former are common, and may be treated as such; the latter are not common, and may not be treated as such. In one word, that which belongs to God may not be treated as if it belonged to us." In the words of Augustus Hare,

"It is true that in one sense everything belongs to God; for everything was made by Him. 'The whole earth is the LORD's and all that therein is.' In this view of the matter, every day may be called the LORD's Day as well as Sunday—so, too, every man may be called His as well as His very Apostles. In this sense all are His—that is, we are His property and His subjects, because He is the Maker of heaven and earth. Therefore, those who are heartily desirous of doing right, and of giving God His own, as far as may be, would never think of unhallowing or profaning any one act or moment of their lives. They would never think of keeping back any part of their time or of their thoughts from God's service, because they know that He has a right to every part of them, and that they ought to be wholly and altogether His. In this spirit the Apostle bids us pray always, which means, be always acting as in the presence of God; or again, whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God—that is, remember God in the smallest actions of your lives as well as the greatest.

"But though this be true, it by no means follows that some things may not belong to God more nearly and more peculiarly than others. Monday, for example, belongs to God as well as Sunday; but it does not belong to Him so closely or so much, for the best of all possible reasons, because He has not been pleased to make it so. He is by right the Master and owner of every day in the week, and to show that He is so, He has chosen whichever of them He pleased. And what do we show when we set it apart and employ it in His worship? Why,

we show our faith—we show that we believe Him to be the Master and owner of our whole time.”

And this is the object and meaning of all these Commandments. We worship God in our thoughts—well and good—but, when we kneel before Him we acknowledge that our bodies are His; when we praise Him aloud, we acknowledge that our voices are His; when we attend His worship at His house on His day, we acknowledge that our time is His. Or, take it the other way—when we bow down to anything else, or do not bow down to Him, we say we may do what we please with our bodies; when we take His name in vain, we say we may do what we please with our speech; when we stay away from Church, we say we may do what we please with our time. It is not a question of outward form, but it is a question of faith, or no faith, when we, by staying away from Church, call our time our own, or when, by coming to Church and keeping holy the LORD’s Day, we consider Sunday more entirely and peculiarly the LORD’s Day than any of the other six. Let us, therefore, ask ourselves a few questions.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

REMEMBER THAT THOU KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH-DAY. SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR, AND DO ALL THAT THOU HAST TO DO; BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH OF THE LORD THY GOD. IN IT THOU SHALT DO NO MANNER OF WORK, THOU, AND THY SON, AND THY DAUGHTER, THY MAN-SERVANT AND THY MAID-SERVANT, THY CATTLE, AND THE STRANGER THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES. FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IN THEM IS, AND RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY; WHEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY, AND HALLOWED IT.

1. GOD’S work of creation was complete by the Sabbath—His work of redemption by the LORD’S Day. Am I grateful for my creation and redemption? and do I show my gratitude outwardly, by reverencing the day by which those blessings are commemorated?

2. Have I remembered that all my time was God's gift, and have I therefore sanctified it by dedicating to Him the portion on which He has set His Name?

3. Have I been sufficiently mindful of His goodness in thus setting apart a certain time from the business of the world, and giving me leisure, opportunity and incitement to seek first His kingdom and its righteousness?

4. Have I considered Sunday as an opportunity of laying up a store of good resolutions, sanctified by prayer, and strengthened by that grace which may be obtained only through God's ordinances, to be put in practice throughout the week, or have I shut up my Christianity with my Prayer Book, and thought no more of it till next Sunday?

5. Have I always considered that each individual Sunday teaches its own peculiar lesson of doctrine or practice, as shown in its Gospel and Epistle? have I endeavoured each Sunday to trace this out, and to meditate upon it during the week?

6. Have I shown my reverence for God's day by abstaining on it from the business of the world?

7. When I laid aside the business of the world on that day, did I ever take my own pleasure on it, or did I as a matter of constant duty consecrate the day by public as well as private devotion?

8. Was my Sunday a day of rest or a day of idleness?

9. Have I ever suffered a light excuse, such as distance, cold, heat, bad weather, to make me forsake the assembling myself with my brethren on that day? or have I considered Church as an indispensable duty?

10. Have I been as careful of those committed to my charge, so as to see that they did what I considered necessary for me to do for my own salvation—remembering that they as well as I were once under bondage?

11. Have I endeavoured to keep these four commandments, not as so many different commandments, choosing for myself which of them suits my own particular temperament, but as four connected branches of one great commandment, teaching me with respect (1) to my soul, (2) to my body, (3) to my words, and (4) to

my time, the one great lesson to love the LORD my God with my whole heart? And,

12. Have I considered how peculiarly binding it is on me, as one of God's chosen people, to keep the Commandments of Him Who chose me?

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## LECTURE VI.

### THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

IN examining ourselves on the Commandments of the second table, we shall do well always to bear in mind our SAVIOUR's assertion, that "the second is like unto it." That is to say, the Commandments of the second table are like those of the first; and that does not mean only, given by the same authority, but that the Commandments themselves are alike. S. John shows us how this is, when he says, that if a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, it cannot be expected that he will love God Whom he has not seen. There is about the same difference between the Commandments of the first table and those of the second as there is between determining to do a thing and doing it. We love God, and we worship Him, we praise Him, we pray to Him, we kneel down before Him, and keep holy His day, and honour His house; but many of us wish to show some sign that we are in earnest, that it is not only the worship of the lips; we want, as it were, to do something for God. This, in its literal tense, of course we cannot do. God does not want our services; we cannot by our praise make Him greater, nor by our thanks make Him happier. We are His servants, no doubt; but very unprofitable servants we must be when we cannot, however much we wish it, do good to our Master. But though really we cannot do any profit to God, yet God permits us to relieve our minds by doing something. He permits us to show our



love for Him in our deeds and works, by doing good to somebody on earth, who, as far as that one point goes, He allows to stand in His place. And thus it is that the Commandments of the second table are like those of the first. By those of the first we are told to love the LORD our GOD; by those of the second we are told to love the LORD our GOD in the persons of those who stand to us in His place; and, therefore, when we honour them, and obey them, and reverence them, and feel kindly disposed towards them, for God's sake, we in truth honour, obey, reverence, and love God Himself.

We may trace this, more or less, in all the Commandments of the second table, but we may do it more easily in the fifth than in any of the others; for, in fact, our parents, and those whom God has set over us, are more nearly in the place of God than the rest of our neighbours. Before a child can understand anything about God, he can perfectly understand obedience to his parent; and, therefore, as long as that child's understanding is tender, the parent is actually to it as God upon earth. And when the child grows up, and has learnt that the authority of his father and mother comes from God, and that God has taught him, while yet unable to comprehend the mysteries of religion, to love Him and honour Him, by making it natural that he should, while little, love, honour, and obey his father and mother; when, I say, he has grown up and learnt that this natural affection is but, as it were, the type of another and higher affection, he will not think little of the type because he begins to understand better the reality; but will then love his father and mother the more, because, besides its being natural for him so to do, he feels that it is they who have led him by degrees to feel love for his heavenly FATHER, GOD.

And what I say of parents is equally true of all others who in any way represent God in the matter of authority. The Apostles do not tell you to reverence the king because he is the ruler, but because the powers that be are ordained of God. They do not tell you to reverence your minister for anything about himself, but



because he is the ambassador of God to you. In fact, the Fifth Commandment is the third put into practice. We honour God's holy Name and His Word in the persons of those whom He has chosen to represent Him.

I wish you would remember that, and think upon it seriously, for there is no commandment I see you break so much as the fifth. I am sure that if parents considered themselves in the light of persons whom God has permitted to represent His own Majesty and Justice to their children, they would be more careful how they trained those children up. And if children were more taught to look up to their parents as the representatives to them of God's care, and God's providence, and God's guidance, we should have much more honouring of our fathers and mothers here, and many more of us would have our days prolonged in that heavenly land which the LORD our God giveth us.

Let us therefore ask ourselves some questions about this Commandment, and think what answers we must give to God when He asks us the same at the last day.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER, THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG IN THE LAND WHICH THE LORD THY GOD GIVETH THEE.

1. Have I reflected why it was that our SAVIOUR called the Commandments of the second table *like* those of the first, and considered that if I do not love my brother whom I see with my bodily eyes, I cannot feel much affection to Him Whom I can see only with the eyes of faith?

2. Have I remembered that in most cases the only way I have of showing my love to God is by loving my neighbours for His sake? Have I been sufficiently thankful that when, to mortal eyes, He withdrew Himself from the earth, He left these behind Him as His representatives, and told me that He would consider what I did to them as if I had done it to Him?

3. Have I always remembered that the first and earliest of these representatives of God are my parents? Have I rendered them always such love, honour, and obedience as is due to those who to me stand in the place of God upon earth.

4. Have I seen the breadth of this Commandment, and considered that as a subject my sovereign, as a Christian my Bishop and the Priest of my parish, as a servant my master, as a subject the magistrates, stand to me in the light of a parent—to be honoured and obeyed, not so much for their own sakes, as because in obeying them I obey God?

5. Have I always applied to these particular cases our SAVIOUR'S general rule, and asked myself, if I were a parent, a sovereign, a priest, or a magistrate, how would I have my children, my subjects, my parishioners, or my fellow-citizens, behave to me?

Does my conscience accuse me—

- (1.) Of disrespect to my parents, including sulkiness and bad temper, as well as disobedience?
- (2.) Of consorting with disloyal persons, or reading and taking a pleasure in disloyal newspapers?
- (3.) Of being discontented with the minister whom God has provided for me, and heaping to myself teachers?
- (4.) Of schism and disloyalty to my Church, dividing that which CHRIST prayed might be one?

Have I considered this Fifth Commandment as the foundation of all the Commandments of the second table, and as the link which connects them with those of the first? Have I been the more careful about everything that relates to it for this reason?

6. Have I considered that by attaching a promise to this alone of all the Commandments, God intended to draw my attention particularly towards it? Have I reflected on the peculiar value of that promise to a Christian, and remembered what inheritance was promised to *me*, and *when* it was promised?

## LECTURE VII.

## THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

I AM afraid I am speaking to most people's experience when I ask them if they do not remember how much more they thought of a sin the first time they committed it, than they thought of the same sin when they had committed it before, and yet the sin is the same sin in reality, and, what concerns us more, appears the same sin in the eye of God. We say, in common talk, that a man's conscience has got blunted, and, as it were, does not cut him so sharply, because it has been so often put to the same use before. This certainly is true, but it would be more true and more Scriptural to say that the HOLY GHOST, Who from our baptism forward had made His abode within us, has withdrawn from us when we resisted Him, by committing the sin first; perhaps He has not altogether withdrawn or gone away, but, at all events, He is not so much present with us as He was; and therefore our conscience, which is His weapon, does not give us so much uneasiness.

This is the only way in which we can account for one sin, that is to say, the breaking of one Commandment, giving us so much more pain than the breaking of another, though we know and say all the while that there is no one Commandment of more consequence than another in God's sight. This is how we come to think of great sins and little sins, whereas the only difference between a great sin and a little sin in God's sight is, that one is a habit, and the other is a sin of infirmity. The one is a sin not repented, and the other is a sin repented; in all other respects a sin means an act of disobedience to God, and thus, shocking as it may be for us to reflect upon, a man who has got a habit of swearing, or a habit of lying, or a habit of petty stealing, may be in God's sight more guilty than a man who has committed a murder.

It is through God's mercy, in making this sin so rare among us, that we think so much about it. I suppose if a man were murdered within ten miles of us, the whole village would be full of it; every one would be wondering how a man could be so wicked as to commit so great a sin. So far, we are quite right; it is a subject of wonder: but is it not equally a subject of wonder that there should be a great many men among us who commit sins as great by breaking other Commandments of equal value as the Sixth? and is it not a much greater cause of wonder that the only reason why we cannot see this is, that so many people are committing the same sin, that we get quite used to it? We should think just as little of murder, did it happen as often.

I have just been reading an old historian, who, living in the time of Edward the Third, wrote the account of his wars in France; he tells us not only how many men were killed in this or that battle, which, if the war be lawful, may possibly be justifiable in the sight of God, but every now and then he tells us also such stories as that some general had some friend of his killed at the taking of such a place, and had all the women and children in it put to death. In another place we hear of a town burnt, and all the inhabitants put to death, because one great lord had a quarrel with another.

Now the wonderful thing here is, not that these great sins were committed, but that the historian, who was a clergyman, relates them as matters of course, things that must happen in every war, not indeed exactly to be approved of, but not deserving of any particular condemnation. Nor ought we greatly to blame the historian for this; a man writing now of some popular and common sin, such as the breaking of the Seventh Commandment,—things that I am sorry to say we hear of and read of every day,—might, and often does, write of it with as much unconcern as Froissart writes about the breaking of the Sixth Commandment in his day. Let us learn from this at least one lesson; not to think a sin great only because it is unusual, for if we do, God may well punish us by making it common among us. We are

shocked at the breaking of the Sixth Commandment ; it is a very wholesome feeling, let us encourage it, for it was not so with us always ; not two hundred years ago murder was a very common thing. The way to encourage it is, by guarding ourselves strictly against those things that lead to murder ; that is to say, anger, jealousy, discontent at our rulers ; sedition, consorting with seditious men, holding light the great peace-maker which CHRIST has placed among us, His Church. These are the things which two hundred years ago brought murder into the country, and caused it to be as lightly thought of as any other crime ; and these things, if encouraged, may bring it in again, or rather, God may give us up to our own devices, and may suffer us to eat of the bitter fruit of our own planting.

Bearing in mind these things, let us ask ourselves a few questions on the manner in which we have kept the Sixth Commandment.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

##### THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER.

I thank my God that hitherto He has forbore to punish our grievous national sins of disrespect to His Name and His Church, as He did those of our forefathers, and that instances of murder are so rare now, that their frequency has not diminished the horror which an unblunted conscience always feels at the sight of any new sin. I thank my God, Who has removed this temptation far from me ; but have I remembered that out of the *heart* proceed murders ?

1. Let me reflect, therefore.

2. Have I ever let my temper get the better of me, and used angry and irritating words towards my neighbour, encouraging thereby bad feelings in myself, and provoking them in him. Have I ever felt a desire to return evil for evil, or railing for railing ?

3. Have I ever wished evil to my neighbour, and en-



couraged anger in my heart, though I did not show it in my outward conduct?

4. Have I, for instance, ever allowed my thoughts to run upon the evils any person has brought upon me, or the injuries he has done me, instead of submitting myself to these things, as punishments sent from God, like sickness or any other calamity, and forcing myself to think of evil men not as of my enemies, but as "a sword of Thine?"

5. When, therefore, others spoke of me unjustly, has my first thought, after having done my best to clear my character, been, For what sin of mine has God brought this punishment on me?

6. Have I ever accustomed myself to reflect and meditate on the benefit that would or might accrue to me from the death of such and such individuals, and have I ever attempted to soften that sin to my conscience by some such conventional phrase, as "expectations" or "possible contingencies?"

7. Have I always remembered with thankfulness that many of these things which might otherwise easily have escaped my observation, were pointed out to me by my Heavenly Master Himself? Have I shown my thankfulness for this great kindness, by attending to His explanations, and guarded against any approach to the breaking of this Commandment, the more carefully, out of respect and reverence to His gracious warning?

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## LECTURE VIII.

### THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

MEN judge from what they see and feel: if an act brings misery into a family, they can very easily understand that that act is sinful, and with one accord they rise up to condemn it. In thinking of the Seventh

Commandment, the world would show no mercy to an adulterer or adulteress, because any one can understand, that an act which destroys for ever all confidence between husband and wife, which casts a doubt which can never be removed on all the relations of father and children, and brothers and sisters, which breaks up for ever the domestic happiness of a whole family, must be a sin; and the Seventh Commandment is acknowledged at once as the righteous law of a God Who wills the earthly as well as the heavenly happiness of His creatures.

I may say the same of the sins of seduction, and its result, fornication. The misery is apparent; God's verdict and man's verdict, therefore, go together; and thus invariably, even in this world, the sin is its own punishment in a manner far more terrible and far more certain than can be said of any other sin whatever.

On this point, therefore, I need not speak. The world has taken my sermon into its own hands, and upon this part of the subject, at all events, it not only speaks God's truth, but speaks it in a way that the most ignorant cannot fail to understand, and the most careless cannot help listening to.

But there are many ways in which this Commandment is broken which the world takes no notice of. The harm is not evident, and in its ignorance the world overlooks the sin. If you will read the fifth chapter of S. Matthew, from the twenty-first to the twenty-eighth verse, you will see very clearly what I mean, and how very different is the judgment by which we shall be tried at the last day from that by which we are tried at present.

The world does not judge of an act before it is committed,—very properly no doubt, because the world cannot read hearts. God, Who can read hearts, judges of those things which He knows will lead to the commission of that of which even the world judges,—the thoughts, the words which may never be expressed, which His Providence may render harmless in the acts, which have led to nothing in our particular case, but which have led to something in thousands of other cases,

and will lead to something in thousands of others, and which our countenance perhaps may have helped to deprive of their warning.

There are things which we pass over as pardonable sins,—we call them levity, idleness, frivolousness; we do not think it just or right to visit them with heavy censure; but if we could see what God sees, we should not only understand the justice of the judgment in the way of preventing crime, but we might also understand that between the act itself, which we are content to condemn, and the thoughts it prompts, and the word that leads to, and the deed that conduces to it, the difference is not so great as we imagine.

It is not for nothing that the Church has placed the lesson of Dinah and her brothers in the midst of Lent, nor that she will read it in your ears before you are confirmed. See what Dinah's sin was, and what it led to. You cannot altogether bring yourself to blame the conduct of Jacob's sons as you ought to blame merciless and treacherous revenge, and wholesale murder, and pitiless massacre. You cannot but feel that it is some palliation to their sin when they reply, as they do, to the reproof of their father, "Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?" You cannot but feel that you yourselves would be moved to anger on such an occasion, and though you might pray against its breaking out into such terrible consequences, you cannot speak of those consequences as you ought to speak of murder and treachery.

Now let us look what the sin of Dinah was, and see if it is not a very common one. It would seem that God has put that chapter into the Bible, and that the Church had selected it as a Sunday lesson, for the express purpose of showing, even to man's judgment, the justice of that passage of S. Matthew which I have just read to you.

Dinah, who at that time was about fifteen or sixteen years old, went out to see the daughters of the land. If we compare the account we have in the Bible with that of the Jewish historian, we shall find that it was on the

occasion of a great festival, which the people of the land—that is to say, the idolaters—had made. It is quite certain that her family did not approve of it, for we find none of her brothers were there; the fifth verse says that they were with the cattle in the field, and they must have gone there purposely to be out of the way of it, because it was not only a public, but an annual festival, which no one who lived in their land could be ignorant of. She went alone, and without permission; this too, is evident, for Jacob, her father, as we see, did not hear of it till afterwards, nor did he speak of it till his sons had come back from the field.

This, therefore, was the sin of Dinah: she had no sort of intention of committing that open and definite sin which the world would call breaking the Seventh Commandment; all she wanted probably was to look at the dresses which other girls would wear at the festival, and to show her own, and to talk, and dance, and amuse herself; and to do this she went without the knowledge of her family, and against what, as they showed by their acts, they would have approved had they known it. This was all; but what it led to was her own disgrace, the grievous sin of her two brothers, and the destruction of the whole town.

You can all judge of the act by such consequences as these, but the question is—if Shechem had never seen her, would her sin have been less? That he saw her was an accident, it was no act of her own; all that followed was involuntary on her part; but no single deed of all this great string of crimes would have happened had she done her duty in the first instance,—had she not followed her own pleasure, and gratified her own vanity, or curiosity, or love of amusement.

If you think of this, it will not seem extraordinary to you that I place under the head of the Seventh Commandment a great many things that seem to you quite innocent. No doubt they may be innocent, in reality, if properly indulged. Dinah, had she obtained permission of her father,—had she been taken care of by her brothers,—might very possibly have enjoyed the festival



without the shadow of sin. I am sure there is nothing in the Bible to lead one to suppose she might not ; but at the same time it is quite plain that there are circumstances which may make the most innocent things sinful, and of these circumstances young people are not always the best judges. Whenever these circumstances do occur, then the indulging in an act otherwise innocent becomes a sin, even to the breaking of the Seventh Commandment ; and, whenever this is the case, the sin is the same, whether any evil consequences result from it or not.<sup>1</sup>

It is in this spirit that I would have you examine yourselves on the Seventh Commandment. You have not broken it in outward act,—thank God for that ; He probably has preserved you when you were thinking little of it yourselves ; but examine yourselves whether you have not heedlessly or even wilfully done things which have led others into open sin, whom you have no reason to suppose to be people of worse natural dispositions than you are yourselves ? and ask yourselves fairly and honestly whether the sin is less on your part than it is on theirs, because it pleased God, for some reason with which you had nothing to do, to preserve you when He was not pleased to preserve them ?

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

##### THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

1. Have I considered that out of the heart proceed adulteries, as well as other sins ?
2. Have I been as careful of my heart—that is to say, of my thoughts—as I have of my actions ?
3. If I have hitherto been kept from breaking this Commandment openly, what is it that has preserved me ?
4. Was it the thought that by my Baptism my body became the temple of the HOLY GHOST, and that it was

<sup>1</sup> See Miller's Sermons. The best Tract for distribution on this very difficult subject is one by the Rev. John Chandler, of Witley, called "Unchastity before Marriage."



not possible that a Christian could defile the temple of his God?

5. Or was it simply the fear of my neighbours, and of the disgrace which the world attaches to the commission of such crimes?

6. I have often prayed to God not to lead me into temptations; can I remember acting against my own prayers, and leading myself into them?

7. Have I followed my pleasure without considering or caring for the dangers into which it led me?

8. Have I been circumspect in my outward conduct, paying attention to the advice and remonstrances of those who were more experienced than myself?

9. Have I given no occasion for scandal by levity, if I have not justified it by sin?

10. Has my language been modest? Has my conduct and bearing been such as would give neither excuse nor countenance for sins against this Commandment in others?

11. What instances can I remember of remissness in any of these particulars? Were these instances repented of when they occurred, or were they justified or passed lightly by?

12. Have they recurred so often as to become habitual?

If I cannot clear myself in this particular, let me remember that my preservation from disgrace as well as sin has been due, not to my watchfulness, but to God's mercy, and that though in the sight of the world I may be innocent, in the sight of God I may be as guilty as those whom He has punished in this world by shame and dishonour.

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## LECTURE IX.

### THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

THE judgment of the world and the judgment of God is very often precisely the same; that is to say, the

world condemns and punishes the very same sin that God condemns and punishes.

This, however, whenever it does happen, is only an accidental occurrence, as when two roads leading to different places happen to have some part of their line in common; for in truth the world's judgment and God's judgment are founded upon perfectly different principles; they may have some portion in common, because these principles are not in opposition to each other, only different in character and object, but the two lines do not lead to the same point, and therefore there is a very great danger when we are on that part which is common to both, that we fancy we are walking on the one, when, in fact, we are walking on the other.

The world estimates the amount of sin by the amount of harm done, or harm that might have been done; God estimates the sin by the fact of whether the subject in question is obedience or disobedience; the harm that happens to be done through any sin, is no element of judgment with Him, because no sins can do any harm at all without His permission; He can, if He pleases, bring even good out of evil, and if He does not always please, it is only upon the principle on which the Psalmist calls the wicked "A sword of God," that is to say, He is pleased to make from the consequence of one man's sin a punishment or a trial to some one else, to whom He considers a trial salutary, or a punishment due.

The truth is, the world acts on a principle of selfishness, it condemns those sins only which are likely to hurt itself, and thinks little of those which are injurious only to God's majesty and honour. Murder and theft, like any other acts of wilful disobedience, are very great sins in the sight of God, and the world also sets its face against them. Why? plainly because any man may be murdered or robbed, and therefore every man is ready to condemn that by which he may himself one day be made to suffer.

It does not hurt us that we live next door to an infidel or an atheist, therefore we are very tender of such people,

we can afford to be liberal towards them, and we are liberal, we think it very wrong indeed to disturb a man for his religious opinions.

But it is very uncomfortable to live next door to a murderer, or a thief, for there is no knowing whom that man may next take to murdering or robbing, therefore we are none of us disposed to be liberal to such as these, or to regard with toleration their peculiar ideas concerning life and property ; that is to say, we are very liberal with the honour and glory of Almighty God, but by no means liberal about things which concern our own safety.<sup>1</sup>

It should seem, therefore, that there are two classes of sins, those which God condemns by His Bible and His Commandments, while the world condemns them by its laws and its opinions, and those which God condemns equally in His Bible, while the world is perfectly indifferent about the matter.

Now whenever we take upon us the necessary task of judging ourselves on this description of sin, which is condemned alike by the judgment of God and that of the world, there is always this danger, we cannot tell the motive upon which we are acting ; we keep clear upon some particular sin, and hold ourselves blameless ; perhaps we are so, but we can never be quite certain whether we do this from love of God or from fear of the world, because in this particular instance the love of God and the fear of the world would lead us to precisely the same thing.

If we do the thing which is right, it may seem of little consequence what makes us do it, and it is of little consequence, so far as this world is concerned, but, when we come to be judged by the judgment of the next world, the motive on which we have acted, that very point on which it is so easy to deceive ourselves, may be that

<sup>1</sup> Jurymen may easily judge themselves by this rule—whenever they acquit a self-murderer on grounds of insanity, when they are conscious that they would not acquit any other description of murderer on the same grounds, then they convict themselves of perjury under the influence of this principle of self.

which makes the whole difference between eternal life and eternal damnation.

Many a man judging himself on the Eighth Commandment, who is conscious of none of those sins which the world considers disgraceful, who is quite certain that he has never robbed, nor pilfered, nor cheated, nor swindled, gives himself a full acquittal, and thinks that with respect to that Commandment at all events, he is in the sight of God blameless, when all the time it is the fear of the world, not the fear of God, that has been acting upon him.

Now this is a very dangerous deceit, God will not reward us for keeping ourselves free from sin for fear of the world, because God, though He recompenses us according to the cleanness of our hands, does not reward us for our work done, but for our faithfulness in doing it.

It will be no recommendation to us in His sight, when on the last day He convicts us of some glaring act of disobedience and unfaithfulness towards Him, that we say, yes, but see how obedient and faithful we have been to the judgment of the world; we have not done one single act which the world has called wicked or disgraceful. Do you think it would mend the matter, that God, who requires our absolute obedience, should find out that we had another master, whose commands we obeyed better than we did His? and do we not convict ourselves of this when we obey God's commands, if they are backed by those of the world, and do not obey God's commands when they are not so backed? In judging ourselves upon such matters as the Eighth Commandment, the only safe plan is to take some point in which the world is neutral, or in which its opinion rather favours the sinner. Let us judge ourselves very strictly in that particular according to God's judgment, being more particular in this, and more jealous in examining the value of our excuses and palliations, than we should be in matters relating to other commandments, and if we find ourselves failing in this part of it, let us be very sure that the reason why we do not break the whole, and rob, and pilfer, and cheat, and swindle with the worst, is not the fear of displeasing a good God, Who has done so much

for us, and cannot bear to look upon such things, but the fear of losing our character in a world that does not like to be robbed, and pilfered, and swindled, and cheated, and therefore has determined to consider these things disgraceful.

Now take the case of a bargain ; the world smiles upon a sharp bargainer, cannot exactly make up its mind to approve indeed, but considers him clever, while God says we are not to defraud or go beyond one another in any matter. How have we acted in such transactions ourselves ? have we concealed defects, or exaggerated good points in our bargains beyond what we knew to be the truth ? have we taken advantage of other people's ignorance or inexperience ? because if we have it is not the word of God that has stopped us in this instance, and from this we may make a pretty good guess that it is not the word of God that has stopped us from breaking the Commandment in every other particular.

This is the meaning of judging ourselves ; it is of no great use, particularly in such Commandments as the Eighth, to judge ourselves as to whether we have or have not done any particular thing ; the point to which we should direct our attention is, what has kept us from doing it, or what has urged us to do it. It is of no use to judge ourselves in one fashion, when the judgment of the last day will be in another ; and it is quite possible to imagine a case in which a man's honesty, as the world calls honesty, has been the cause of his final damnation ; worldly honesty is often a temptation and a snare, it prevents a man from seeing his own wickedness, it prevents him from being frightened, it prevents him from repenting, it prevents him from being saved, and all the while it is no real virtue, it has nothing to do with religion and God's Commandments ; he is honest because public opinion says it is a shame to be a thief, and he is proud that no one can bring this against him. In this one virtue it is for the praise of man he is working, and perhaps he gets it ; people say, Well, whatever his faults were, he was an honest worthy man, and gave every one their due. He has got all that he ever tried for, and



reaps his full reward. And what then? what will it profit him, when GOD asks him, what have you done for My sake? what have you done because I commanded it? what have you done to show your gratitude to Me, and your love to your SAVIOUR? You have worked hard for the praise of men, and for their sake have withstood many temptations. Well, you have what you worked for; men do think well of you. Is there anything more that you desire? have you tried for anything more?

Now no one can say but that this is a danger, and that the man has been led into it by thinking of his own honesty. If he would really like to try his own honesty, and whether it is keeping the Eighth Commandment of GOD, or keeping some commandment of men, let him examine himself and his honesty by the rule of GOD's Commandments, and ask himself some such questions as these which I now give you to take home with you.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

##### THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

1. I thank my GOD that I have never robbed any body, and that I have never stolen any thing; I thank my GOD that I should consider doing so, mean and unbecoming my character; but is this horror that I have of stealing respect to GOD or respect to man? I shall be able to know this certainly by asking myself whether I consider it a greater crime to steal to a large amount, or to steal some trifle that will never be missed, because men think the one greater than the other, but GOD says, Thou shalt not steal at all.

2. But if I have never been guilty of downright stealing, have I never stolen indirectly?

3. Have I ever taken advantage of my neighbour's necessities, to obtain some article of his below its real value? which is extortion.

4. Have I ever brought on him an unjust lawsuit, or by taking advantage of some mistake in the law, forced one on him? which is litigiousness.

5. Have I ever tempted him to risk his property on chance? which is gambling.

6. Have I ever in selling concealed the defects of my own goods, and in buying cried down the value of my neighbours' ? which is lying as well as stealing.

7. Have I ever borrowed or run in debt, knowing all the time that I could not pay? this is also lying as well as stealing.

8. If I have hitherto thought but little upon these things, is it not that I have never tried my keeping of the Eighth Commandment by our SAVIOUR's general rule—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?

9. Have I ever allowed myself to indulge in any particular description of dishonesty, because public opinion is not so much against it as it is against other stealing? for instance, have I thought little of poaching, or smuggling, not considering that God makes no difference how I take from my neighbour, nor whether I steal from one man or from the nation?

10. Have I ever considered how unprofitable it was to break the Commandment, that I cannot be saved without repentance, that repentance requires me to give back what I took? have I considered then how useless and foolish it is to take my neighbour's goods in any way, if in order to be saved I must first give them back again?

11. Have I ever thought that when I plead poverty as an excuse for dishonesty I must plead faithlessness also, for that God has told me in so many words (Ps. xxxvii. 3,) that they who trust in Him and do good, shall certainly have bread to eat? Have I ever considered that doubting this is doubting His truth?

This is the way in which we have to examine ourselves upon the Eighth Commandment, and when we have done so with prayer and watchfulness, I doubt much whether most of us will not have to pray God to have mercy on them for having broken it, rather than to thank God for grace enabling them to keep it. I doubt much whether those who have kept it will be able quite to satisfy their consciences that it was God they were obeying, and not the world?

But I am quite sure that all should distrust themselves, and their own strength to keep it, and whether their station in life be high or low, should join with one accord in the prayer, "Incline our hearts to keep this law."

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## LECTURE X.

### THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

IF we were to examine ourselves strictly and honestly, tracing our sins to their first causes, as indeed we must learn to do if we want to get rid of them at all—I think we should find selfishness to be at the bottom of every one of them. Selfishness is not exactly the word either, it does not quite express my meaning, but it is as near as I can come to it. What I mean is, putting SELF forward, so as to make it the first thing in our thoughts—what we like, or what we hate, or what we choose, or what we do not choose, till at last, instead of being the first thing in our thoughts, it comes to be the only thing in our thoughts, and we end in regarding nothing but self.

With regard to the Commandments of the first table, this is clear enough, if we break the three first, it is by taking something that we choose, whether it be our pleasure, or our gain, or our own fancy of what God and His Church ought to be, instead of what God has revealed, and thus making a god of our own imagination. As for breaking the Fourth Commandment, there can be no mistake about that being a preference of ourselves to God, for God Himself calls it taking our pleasure on His holiday. This is no less true when we come to the Commandments of the second table; but in none of them all is it so remarkable as in the Ninth, which, at first sight, seems to have little or nothing to do with it.

Let us see how this is.

There is nothing, you all know, that flies so fast as

any little story to the disadvantage of our neighbour. Every body is eager to tell it; everybody is ready to listen to it; and I am sorry to say, everybody that hands it on is ready to add a little, so that when it comes round to its first authors, they would hardly know their own story. But may not this be the simple pleasure of talking? That will not account for it—for a story to the advantage of our neighbour, some good deed that he has done, some act of piety, or self-denial, ought to fly just as fast, and just as far, as if a love of talking were the true cause; but it does not, you know it does not.

Now, this repeating stories to the disadvantage of our neighbour is the most usual way of breaking the Ninth Commandment that there is. No doubt bearing false witness against him in a court of justice is the direct way of breaking it, just as killing a man is the direct way of breaking the Sixth. But as we, who live under a spiritual rule, know that there are many ways of breaking the Sixth Commandment without at all breaking the laws of the land, so we may form a very good idea that there may be ways of breaking the Ninth without ever going near a court of justice.

But where is the temptation? Why are we not as fond of speaking good of our neighbour, which we may do without offending God, as we are of speaking ill of him, which we can hardly do without breaking the Commandments? I am now speaking of quarrels and of the idle and wicked things people say of one another while they are angry; beyond a doubt it does happen sometimes that people spread malicious stories about their neighbours because they have a grudge against them and wish to hurt them; but this, though certainly coming within the condemnation of the Ninth Commandment, inasmuch as it is bearing false witness, I should rather speak of under the head of the Sixth, because it is hurting and injuring our neighbour maliciously, and I think the Ninth is intended for cases in which there is hurt, no doubt, but no malice whatever. Strange as it may seem, these are by far the most numerous cases of evil speaking that come before us.

Now, how can repeating stories, that injure a neighbour against whom we bear no malice, afford us any pleasure so great as to tempt us to break God's Commandment, that is to say—for we must not disguise the penalty from ourselves—so great as to tempt us into eternal damnation?

If we examine this matter closely, I think we shall find that the bottom of it all is what I have called selfishness.

God measures us all alike by the rule of His Commandments, no doubt, but then we measure ourselves by one another. It is as if God had determined that a man six feet high should be considered a tall man, yet a man five feet eight, though short with respect to the standard of six feet, would consider himself a tall man if none of his neighbours were higher than five feet six. No doubt it would make very little difference when he came at last to be measured by God's standard; he would still be four inches short, whether he was taller than his neighbours or not; but while he lived among his neighbours, he would pass for a tall man with them.

And this is just as true about morals. A man very far short of God's standard yet passes for a good man when compared with neighbours not so good as himself. It makes no difference in the end, but it seems to make a difference for the present, and that is all he thinks about. Whatever, therefore, makes his neighbours look less, seems to make him look greater.

Now there are two ways of being better than our neighbours, the one by taking more pains to order our lives and conversations, while our neighbours remain as they were; the other by remaining as we were ourselves, and endeavouring to lower and debase our neighbours to some point below us. No doubt that this is all foolishness, because men are not on the last day to be measured by their neighbours, but by God's rule. But they will not think so; and, beyond a doubt, it gives us very much less trouble and pains, and self-denial, while we live here on earth, to malign our neighbours, than it does to improve ourselves.



Hence the readiness with which we catch at stories to their disadvantage; for you will recollect that these things give quite as much pleasure to the hearer as they do to the relater, and, let me add too, heap upon him quite as much sin; for it is evident that, if every one listened to the backbiter with a serious and disapproving countenance, he would soon leave off repeating his stories; and so Solomon tells you in his Proverbs.

Breaking the Ninth Commandment, then, is a mixture of selfishness and want of faith. Of selfishness, because we are thinking of nothing but the position which we seem to hold ourselves; of want of faith, because we will not believe what CHRIST tells us, that we shall be judged according to our own works, and not according to those of our neighbour.

There is one variety of the sin, of which I would speak more particularly, for I have many servants among my catechumens: and servants are more liable to fall into it than others, though there are many other people that commit it besides them. They will live in a house with a wicked fellow-servant, and see their masters and mistresses wronged by him day after day, without saying a word; but the moment he leaves, they are full of stories to his disadvantage. This I take to be a worse form of breaking the Ninth Commandment than the other, because they are not only doing what they ought not to do, in repeating these stories now that they are useless, and, therefore, simply malicious, but they have been leaving undone what they ought to have done in not telling them before. There is as great a difference between reporting and tale-bearing, as there can be between one thing and another. The one is the discharge of a very painful duty, the other the indulgence of a very sinful pleasure. While that wicked servant was wronging his master, it was the duty of his fellow-servants to accuse him, because their duty to their master required that they should not put up with the wrongs of him whose bread they were eating. But after he had left the place, and it would do no sort of good to reveal his misdeeds, Christian charity would bid us conceal them.

Whenever a master heard of such a story, if he did his duty toward God and his neighbour, he would immediately discharge the servant that brought it, partly for his want of Christian charity then, but principally because he had convicted himself out of his own mouth of neglecting his bounden duty in not having made the accusation before. If breaking the Ninth Commandment in ordinary cases is a mixture of selfishness and want of faith, breaking it in such a case as this is selfishness, want of faith, and cowardice into the bargain.

Now, let us remember, that three times a week we use these words in our prayers—"From envy, hatred, and malice, Good LORD, deliver us"—and that to a great many of every congregation this must be a most terrible prayer, and one that might well make them pause before they offer it, because it is quite certain that unless we act as we pray, we are taking God's Name in vain, and our very prayer becomes a curse. We cannot safely use that prayer unless we determine, so far as in us lies, not only to keep our hands from picking and stealing, not only to keep our bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity, but also to keep our tongues from evil speaking, lying, and slandering. As we pray, so we must act; as we act, so we shall be judged; and if we would not be judged by God at the last day, we must begin by judging ourselves now.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR.

I have not been tempted literally to bear false witness against any one in a court of justice, but have I never said that which I know or suspect to be false?

1. Have I never spoken the truth in such a manner as to convey a false impression?

2. Have I ever allowed a story which I knew to be false to be repeated, when I had the power of setting it right?

3. Have I felt a pleasure in hearing ill of my neighbour when the story was true?

4. If so, what is it that has given me that pleasure?

5. Is it any feeling of satisfaction that I am better than he?

6. Or is it envy, malice, hatred, or simply charitableness?

7. How have I spoken of myself? Have I ever tried to exhibit myself in an untrue light—to make myself out better than I am?

8. How have I felt when others have borne false witness against me?

9. Have I remembered that JESUS CHRIST Himself was borne false witness against, and have I ventured to complain when He did not?

10. Have I considered false witness against myself, concerning a sin that I am innocent of, as a fit punishment sent by God for other sins of which I am guilty?

11. And has the pain it gave me made me more watchful over myself, and more careful lest I commit myself the very sin of false witness which I condemn in another?

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## LECTURE XI.

### THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

IN judging ourselves by the rule of God's Commandments, I never met with any one who thought he had broken the Tenth. Earnest, sincere people, who have no hypocrisy about them, who make no scruple of avowing their sins when they know them, who readily admit and grieve over their offences against every other Commandment, are quite sure that they are free from blame on the Tenth. They are perfectly sincere in this; they do not mean to conceal or palliate anything in real truth and sincerity, but they are not conscious of the blame

they deserve. They know they have never wasted their time in thinking that it would be much better for them if they lived in the squire's house, or if some other person's wife were their wife; still less have they ever taken the trouble of wishing for other people's men-servants and maid-servants, and oxen, and asses, or, if they have done so, it was a very harmless sort of covetousness, which might be indulged without breaking any commandment whatever: in fact, it is not an Englishman's nature to sit down and idly wish for anything; he does not waste his time about anything so useless; his sins as well as his virtues are of an active description, and he is not tempted to dream away or wish away his life at all; therefore he says, and says what he most sincerely thinks, that he does not covet. Perhaps he does not understand what coveting is.

Now, the fact is, that our SAVIOUR has left us a most excellent comment upon this Commandment—one which we can hardly apply practically, without fully entering into the spirit of the Commandment itself, and, I am afraid, fully convicting ourselves of having broken it oftener than we have any other Commandment of the Ten. Our SAVIOUR says, "Whatsoever things ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Whenever we think of the Tenth Commandment, we should do well to measure it and ourselves by this saying.

The saying is a singular one, when we come to think of it; it is not at all like anything that we should have said ourselves, had we been laying down directions for people's guidance. We should have said, do everything that is reasonable, do everything that is charitable, do everything that is kind; but I do not think we should have said, do everything for other people that you wish other people to do to you. For see what it implies: if you wish for half your neighbour's fortune, I do not see how you can escape giving him half yours; if you want your neighbour to give up his time to doing your business, or helping you, or entertaining you, then you have nothing else before you than to give up all your

time and all your work to him in return. You see there is nothing at all about reasonable or right in the matter. Our SAVIOUR's words are, "*all things*," and, lest you should make any mistake about it, He says emphatically, "*all things whatsoever*."

Do you not see that He makes you your own judges, and appoints your own desires to be the measure of your own actions? If you desire no more than is right and reasonable *from* your neighbour, then you are bound to give no more than is right or reasonable *to* your neighbour. If, therefore, you ever feel that this text binds you to do more than is right or reasonable, then you stand self-condemned of wishing for more than is right or reasonable yourself, and this opens upon us a whole host of subjects that we should never have thought of. Oxen, and asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, were the representatives of wealth at the time when this Commandment was made; they constituted all the difference between a rich man and a poor man: these were objects of covetousness then, they are not so now; but, although they have ceased to be so, there are other things which are the representatives of prosperity and wealth in our days, and these take the place of the oxen and asses, and men-servants and maid-servants of simpler times. The first thing that will strike you is money, and money certainly is a temptation for breaking that Commandment. But, after all, you will say, we do not sit down and covet rich people's money; let us, then, look a little further, and see what, in these times, we do covet.

In civilised countries like ours, even money is not always the object of covetousness: people of wealth are people of leisure, people of influence, people of consideration; any sort of discontent, then, at the state of life into which it has pleased God to call us, is within the breaking of the Tenth Commandment. Whenever we think that our talents are overlooked, that a person inferior to ourselves is preferred before us, that more attention is paid to their remarks than is paid to ours,—that, in fact, we are slighted or neglected,—then we covet.



Some classes are more tempted to break some of the Commandments than they are to break others. A poor man, for instance, has greater temptations to break the Eighth; a rich man has greater temptations to break the Seventh. But, in the case of the Tenth, the danger is alike to all; all are tempted to discontent, all are prone to discontent; the poorest among us, who envies the shilling which his less deserving neighbour gets in charity, and the privy councillor, who sees with discontent a less able man preferred to him in the cabinet, alike are tempted to covetousness.

There is no Commandment so spiritual—that is to say, there is no Commandment which may be broken or kept so much by the mind, without the body having anything to do with it—and therefore there is no Commandment broken so often without our thinking that we are breaking it. A man knows when he steals, he cannot miss knowing it,—but he does not always know when he covets; and yet it is no less a breach of God's Commandments because he does not know the precise time he is breaking it. You remember that David prays against his secret sins; this does not mean secret from other people, but secret from himself. It is a terrible thing to think, but it is so notwithstanding, that a man, not in the habit of examining himself, may be continually breaking God's Commandments, and may be held responsible too for breaking God's Commandments, and this without knowing it.

Now, in all this our SAVIOUR's rule is our surest guide, "Whatsoever ye would that men do unto you, even so do ye unto them." Are you discontented that you have not your due?—then give your place, your influence, your fortune, your standing in society, to the first among the hundreds you will meet who deserves it as well as you. You do not like to do this: well, there is one way, and but one, of avoiding the obligation,—be content with what you have. Everything is by comparison. There are but a certain number of places of consideration in society, after all,—to take one you must displace some one else,—perhaps God will give it you: He ruleth over the kingdom of men, and giveth it

to whomsoever He will. If He does give it, then you have a right to it, but if not, do not you wish to take it, and then I am sure that rule of our Lord's will not call upon you to give up yours to any one else. At all events, remember that the Tenth is the most difficult of all the Commandments to judge ourselves upon, and self-examination upon that should be set about with additional care, and more earnest prayer for guidance.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE, THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE, NOR HIS SERVANT, NOR HIS MAID, NOR HIS OX, NOR HIS ASS, NOR ANYTHING THAT IS HIS.

1. When I think of my situation in life, do I always recollect Who placed me there?

2. If my Heavenly FATHER placed me where I am, do I lay to heart that there it is best for me to be?

3. When I am trying to better myself by lawful industry, do I distinguish between making use of the talents which God has given me, and envying the talents which He has given to some one else?

4. Do I feel displeased at the success of a neighbour?

5. Have I been discontented or out of humour that my neighbour is preferred before me?

Let me pray to God that I may always keep before me that covetousness opens the door to the breach of all other Commandments,—that it led Ahab to break the Sixth, David to break the Seventh, Gehazi to break the Ninth,—that our first parents desired—that is to say, coveted—before they fell,—and that it was envy, discontent, and jealousy that led Judas to betray his Master.

When I think of these instances, and reflect that God in His mercy has not permitted my covetousness to bear such evil fruit as this, besides being thankful to Him for His Fatherly care, let me pray to Him to have mercy upon me for the opening which I myself have given for the breaking of so many Commandments, and beseech Him to write, together with the Tenth, all these His laws in my heart.

## CONFESSION.

### AD CLERUM.

“But if by this means he cannot quiet his own conscience, but requireth further help or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister of GOD’s Word and open his grief.”—*Exhortation to the Holy Communion.*

So soon as the Parson has given official notice from the Altar, that the Bishop will be ready to confirm all such as shall be presented to him, the first thing he has to do is to assemble his staff, that is to say, his curates, schoolmasters, and mistresses, pupil teachers, Sunday-school teachers and visitors, and to see that they understand fully their respective duties; he will take that opportunity of explaining to them his system, the text-books he wishes them to use, the class-books, tracts, or papers which he wishes them to distribute.

A week or more may be profitably spent in going over with them these books, tracts, papers, &c., and seeing that they themselves understand what they undertake to teach, a thing which he can by no means afford to take for granted.

He will then ascertain, and note down the amount of time each is able or willing to devote to this work; the numbers each is willing to take in hand, and the description of catechumens for which each is best suited.

He need have no scruple in employing the pupil teachers in this business, because it is essentially school work, and the best description of practice they can be put to. In no other way will they so readily acquire the art of teaching, in no other way will they so perma-

nently fix on their minds those fundamental truths of their religion, which are the groundwork of all education. Still, however, he will be careful to employ them where they will be most useful, among the younger catechumens, their companions, or late companions in the school.

Visitors also and Sunday-school teachers he will find extremely useful in their own particular way ; there will always be some among the catechumens, who will have to relearn even the Creed and the Commandments, and many a Visitor, whose good-will and patience are greater than his learning or acquirements, will here do good service ; lady visitors will generally have three or four families of their own particular dependents and followers, the children of which, particularly the girls, they will teach and advise under the Parson's instructions, very much better than he could do it himself.

His schoolmasters and his male lay assistants, should he be fortunate enough to possess any, will occupy themselves with the young men who can get released from their work at irregular times only. In some parishes he may get a certain amount of assistance also from the clerk or sexton, and, in truth, there is generally work enough for all.

The business of the Curate or Curates will be to circulate about the parish, to ascertain or confirm the characters of the catechumens, to encourage those who are frightened, to reprove those who are slack, to carry messages to the sponsors and parents, to distribute the examination papers, and occasionally to give a hint in filling them up. Generally they are to supply any deficiencies among the teachers, to show them how to do their work, and to assist them in it.

It may be supposed that the Parson has had himself some previous notice of the intended Confirmation, and by this time he will have called upon all the mistresses of families in his parish, and will have ascertained and noticed in his book how often, and at what hours, they are willing to spare their servants for examination, what chance these servants will have of home instruc-

tion and assistance, and what example is likely to be set them by the families in which they are employed. But after he has once given notice in the Church, his business lies at home, not only because he will have reports to receive, books and tracts to distribute, and directions to give to his various assistants, whose whole day's work may very possibly be stopped if the Parson is doing his Curate's work and perambulating the parish, but principally, because it is his duty to be always ready to receive the catechumens as they are sent to him, to examine each, for the first time, singly, and to classify them according to their respective attainments and dispositions. It will not answer, in a large, or even moderately sized parish, to appoint a particular hour for this; his catechumens will mostly be in business of one sort or other, and will not be able to choose their own time for attending. From the very nature of the case, it is necessary that he should see them singly, either alone or attended by their respective sponsors, as they themselves think best; and if he appoints a particular hour for them, there will always be an assemblage of young people waiting for their turns of audience, without any one to superintend them, a thing most particularly to be avoided.

After the business of classification is over, which will itself take much longer than might be expected, from the shyness of the stranger catechumens, and their unwillingness to come forward, the Parson will not be released from his home work; the office of teaching he may very profitably delegate to others, but the examination of conscience he can delegate to none. He must remember that Confirmation follows the law of every sacramental ordinance; that a grace is thereby given and received, which can in no case be inoperative, that, if it be not a savour of life, it is, and must be, a savour of death, and that since habitual sin, unrepented sin, and even levity and heedlessness, will turn God's blessing into a curse, it is his duty to see that none be presented to the Bishop who are unfit, not in an intellectual point of view,—that is comparatively of little



importance, for no damnation is attached to that,—but in a moral and religious point of view.

It may be objected that this involves of necessity Auricular Confession. Most indisputably it does; most indisputably it is out of the question that any Parson can prepare his catechumens at all without it. Confirmation, we must recollect, since it is the imparting to the catechumen sufficient strength from God to enable him to receive to his soul's health the grace of CHRIST'S Body and Blood, is in reality the preparation for the Holy Communion, and the Holy Communion is itself the preparation for death and judgment.

If in the preparation of our people for death and judgment we were simply to call upon our penitents to confess themselves sinners in general terms, and to urge them to throw themselves on their SAVIOUR for mercy and forgiveness, we should be doing our duty, theoretically perhaps, but practically we should be doing very little of it indeed. There is not a man who will not readily call himself, and allow you to call him, a sinner, with any number of cumulative epithets you may select from the Bible; he calls himself a sinner, just as he would call himself dark, or fair, or tall, or short: a fact, no doubt, but a fact with which he has personally little to do. The point that he cannot realise is, that a sinner is a man who has committed one or more sins; hint that he has committed any one sin to entitle him to that name which he has admitted so readily, and he denies it and is offended.

If sinfulness be the aggregate of particular sins, then it is evident, that to convince a man of his sinfulness, you must convince him of his having committed special sins.

It is upon this fact that the directions in the Prayer Book are founded. And, as preparation for Confirmation is in fact preparation for the First Communion, these directions must be more minutely attended to at this time than at any other, because this preparation is a sample of the Christian's preparation for every subsequent Communion. The catechumen, in fact, is learning a lesson under the eye of the Parson, which must be

learnt, like everything else, by doing it, but which, when learnt, he will be able to put in practice by himself on future occasions.

Auricular Confession should very rarely be suffered to become periodical or habitual, because this destroys the sense of personal responsibility, and weakens by disuse the healthy action of the conscience; it will, no doubt, be practised by the Christian, more or less, through his whole life on special occasions, because there is no time of life in which unusual spiritual difficulties may not beset us, and unforeseen temptations lay hold upon us, although it will be less and less needed every year that the mind grows stronger, the habits more confirmed, and the conscience more practised.

But this is not the case with the catechumens. They are now learning this most necessary discipline, just as they are learning their Catechism, or their Faith and Duty, and the Parson is now teaching them how in after life to reckon up their sins, and to confess them to God. He is giving them a rule to measure their sins by, which he instructs them to use for themselves, and is ready at any time to assist them in applying, and therefore it is, that though the discipline of confession is salutary at all times, and on a death-bed comforting to the soul, at Confirmation it is not only salutary and comforting, but indispensable.

The Parson therefore will take the Prayer Book for his rule, and after stating in general terms the proposition on which he is to build all the rest, namely, that men are sinners, and that it is from their LORD's mercy alone that they can expect forgiveness, he will direct his catechumens to anticipate Divine Judgment by judging themselves. They are to "judge themselves, that they be not judged of the LORD." He then shows them how to do it; that is to say, by the "rule of God's Commandments," according to which they will probably be judged on the Last Day.

He will do this by actually laying the Ten Commandments before them one after another, as I have attempted to do, and pointing out the different ways in which these

Commandments can be broken—requiring his catechumens to examine his past life upon each of these points separately—leaving him even then to do it himself, if he finds himself capable of doing it; not pressing help upon him, only offering to assist him if he should find any difficulty. He *will* find difficulty if he gives his mind to it at all, and will come for assistance, which of course the Parson cannot give him unless he states what his difficulty is; that is to say, confesses his sin. Therefore we do urge him, and we should not be acting up to our duty if we did not urge him, that “if by this means he cannot quiet his own conscience, but requireth further help or counsel, he should come to us or to some other minister whom he may prefer, and open his grief.”

For this reason we should not do well to put any check on other priests preparing our young parishioners for Confirmation. It is a preparation of conscience, and, according to the analogy of the Prayer Book, the penitent has a perfect right to select his spiritual assistant. A Priest would be very wrong to put himself forward in another man's parish, and to disturb another man's parochial arrangements; but he ought not to refuse such an office if pressed upon him, nor ought the parish Priest to refuse tickets for Confirmation to such catechumens, unless he has any other reasons for so doing.

There is a popular prejudice against the word Auricular Confession, and this act of discipline is confounded, frequently from ignorance, much more frequently from design, with the Romish doctrine bearing the same name.

Whatever they may be in name or in theory, in practice no two things can be more essentially different; and the difference lies in this, that, in the Church of England, Auricular Confession is not of necessity private, and can never be compulsory. The Parson certainly would exclude from Confirmation an open and notorious evil liver, just as he would exclude such a person from Communion; but as he cannot take upon himself to forbid from either, one who does not choose to open his conscience to him, but must in that case be satisfied with a general warning on the consequences of unre-

penitent sin, so under no assignable circumstances can Confession be other than a matter of the freest choice.

Neither is Confession, even though it be Auricular, necessarily private. It will very frequently be so, because the catechumen himself will prefer it, and, except in very particular cases, the Parson has no right to object to this. But it is not so of necessity; Confession may very properly be made in the presence of a witness; most properly, in the case of a catechumen preparing for Confirmation, in the presence of a sponsor. It may be made even through a sponsor in the absence of the penitent, if it be made with the penitent's consent.

It is the custom among popular lecturers and declaimers to represent Confession as a system of questioning on the Seventh Commandment, and, in support of this view, liberal quotations are made from Romish authors. What may be the practice of the Church of Rome, it is of little consequence for us to inquire. In that of the Church of England, the Seventh Commandment, from its very nature, occupies a much smaller portion of the subject than any of the others. Still, it is quite certain that instances will occur under this head, in one or other of the catechumens, in every Confirmation; and it is equally certain that that sin, which is just as deadly as any other, may not be passed over from motives of false delicacy.

But here, more especially, the system of sponsors comes into play, and sponsors in this case imply parents also. No doubt the Parson will, from time to time, be compelled to hear cases privately, because, if his penitents object to the presence of another person, even a sponsor, they have a perfect right to do so; and his male penitents frequently will object, and now and then his female penitents also, though very seldom, if the case be rightly set before them. In that case, he has but to pray God for grace to direct him to hear and to advise, and then to do it according to the best of his judgment; but as a rule he will do well to hear all such matters in the presence of a sponsor, not only for his own sake, but because the sponsor, being a parent or a



near relation, will be a more perpetual check against any subsequent relapse in the penitent, than the Parson could possibly be himself, and will have derived from this participation in the act of Confession a spiritual authority, a sort of domestic delegation of the priesthood, which he did not possess before.

People who lecture and declaim against Confession are generally themselves very indifferent Christians, to whom this discipline, were it generally admitted to be necessary, would be a grievous burden. By their opposition to the whole system of voluntary Confession,—that is to say, the confession of *other people*, they bear unwilling testimony to the truth of the doctrine. No man is asked to confess if he does not like it; and, therefore, no man could possibly object to his neighbour, who does like it, making a voluntary confession, unless he felt in his heart that his neighbour's confession was a tacit reproof to himself.

These men naturally enough represent Confession as a grievous burden imposed by ambitious and tyrannical Priests upon their flocks, which burden it is the duty of all who compassionate these poor people, and would resist priestly usurpation, to help them to throw off. But the fact is, those who practise it themselves do not regard it as a burden at all, but as a privilege. They consider it a blessing (as, indeed, it is very natural that they should) that they possess an adviser, whose sole business it is to study the Will of God, and whose duty it is to advise them whenever they think they want advice.

I should say myself, that among those who are in any way anxious for their soul's welfare, the difficulty is not to get them to confess, but to prevent them from throwing the whole responsibility in every little case of doubt upon their Parson, instead of exercising their own judgment upon it; and that it is a point on which the Parson will very frequently have to exercise his discretion, whether, in a given case, he ought to encourage the desire of Confession, or to repress it.

There is no doubt but that when God gave to men a



reason and a judgment, enlightened by the HOLY GHOST, He gave them that gift in order that they should use it themselves, and that they are not doing their duty to God when they permit His gifts to lie idle, thus suffering other men's judgment to work for them. Nevertheless, it is extremely natural, and, when not carried to excess, absolutely warranted by Scripture, that they should seek the advice of those in whom they have confidence. So far from men being driven to confession, the fact is, that wherever their privilege is fairly set before them, and properly explained to them, they seek it to an extent that is not only burdensome to the Priest, but sometimes even injurious to themselves.

But if this is the case with penitents generally, very much more is it the case with those catechumens who have grown up in the parish in which they are now to be confirmed. Most of these have but lately left school, where they have been accustomed to look forward to the Parson's periodical visits and weekly examinations with pleasure. They have been accustomed to refer to him their school grievances and childish difficulties; besides being the author of their school festivities and pleasures, he has been their supreme court of appeal, and they generally leave school with an exaggerated idea of their Parson's power and benevolence.

With such ideas, it is most natural that, when reason begins to awake, and they begin to feel for the first time the reality and danger of their sins and spiritual hindrances, that they should come for advice and relief in those weightier matters to him who has been their adviser and support in their childish difficulties.

This feeling will gradually wear away, and so it should; it will wear away in proportion as they have accustomed themselves or have been led by the instructions of their Parson to make use of their own judgment; but the natural feeling of childhood is reliance on others, and in this particular case the feeling is strengthened by habit. As they grow up to manhood, the Parson will himself encourage the growing feeling of self-responsibility, by calling upon them to decide for themselves whenever he

thinks them capable of so doing; for the well-known school axiom, that "the lesson which the pupil has taught himself is of ten times the value of that which he has learnt from any other person," runs through the entire life of man. But he must be very cautious about beginning this lesson while he is preparing them for Confirmation, for this evident reason; however much their judgment is to be trusted in after life on the ordinary and usual occasions in which it is called forth, it is not to be trusted then, because to one just emerging from childhood every occasion he meets with is new and unusual.

It is perfectly evident that such preparation as this must have been begun long before the notice of Confirmation. Before people, old or young, will come to their Parson on such subjects as these, their Parson must have earned their confidence; they must have been already accustomed to talk with him, and they must be already quite sure that he will sympathise with and enter into their difficulties. When Confession is considered as a duty, and Absolution is not to be had without it, as in the Roman Church, people go to it as a duty, and think but little of the personal character of the Priest to whom they confess. But when, as in our Church, Confession is a privilege, and the general absolution may be applied by each penitent for himself to the remission of his own remembered sins, people will not go to Confession unless they feel at home with him to whom they are confessing. There is a natural shyness, particularly from inferiors in social station towards those to whom they are in the habit of looking up as their superiors; and until they are accustomed to make their little confidences to their Parson about things of this world, they will not feel that he can sympathise with them in the temptations affecting their interests in the world to come. To be a Romish Father Confessor is easy; but before a man can become an English Father Confessor, his people must have learned to look upon him somewhat in the light of a father.

There is no criterion of a Parson's work so infallible

as this. Men will not talk of their spiritual difficulties to one who has not evidenced to them his spiritual character; nor will they talk of their difficulties at all to one who has not shown himself their consistent and disinterested friend. Popularity and overflowing congregations go for very little; these things are generally tributes to intellectual superiority, not to faithfulness or moral worth. When people confess voluntarily, they must have confidence in him to whom they confess; when people seek sympathy, they seek it where they have been in the habit of finding it; and when they want spiritual direction, they go, not to the popular preacher, but to the man of God. Other tests may be fallacious, that is infallible; popularity of all sorts may change, this is unchangeable; when people are in temporal or spiritual prosperity, they may remember their mere preacher or mere visitor, or they may forget him, as the case may be; but when adversity, temporal or spiritual, comes over them, as come it will, then they remember him whom, from long previous experience, they recollect as their sympathiser and their friend. They may listen to the preaching of others, but to him "they open their grief."

## ABSOLUTION.

### AD CLERUM.

“That by the ministry of GOD’s Holy Word he may receive the benefit of Absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and the avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.”—*Exhortation to the Holy Communion.*

It would convey a very imperfect idea of the Priest’s office, were the question of Confession ever considered apart from that of Absolution. The penitent seeks his Priest in Confession, not only as the best informed man that he can find on the subject of GOD’s Word, but as the “Ambassador of CHRIST” also, and “the Steward of the Mysteries of God.” In truth, it is something more than advice that he wants; it is the earnest of forgiveness. It is extremely natural that he should do so, and not at all unscriptural. He has been hearing, every morning and evening of his life, that “Almighty God hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and remission of their sins.” It is very natural that he should attach some meaning to that expression, and should demand of GOD’s Ambassador the message which, as he feels himself penitent, he has been told his Master has sent him. He thinks that, as he knows himself to be CHRIST’s faithful though erring servant, he has a right to that grace of which he has been taught to consider his Parson the steward; and the actual fact is, our people do demand it very much more frequently than their Parson feels himself warranted in giving it.

The very idea of a “Steward” is that of a “servant

whom the LORD hath set over His household to give them their meat in due season."

It may be the duty of that Steward at one particular season to give it, at another to withhold it,—at one to give it in one particular manner, at another to give it in some other manner perfectly different. From the very circumstance of that servant's being selected to give meat to the household, it is inferred that he possesses discretion sufficient, not only to give them their meat, but to give it them in due season—that is to say, to dispense the grace entrusted to his keeping in such proportions and at such times as will benefit the receivers most. Still it is essentially necessary that at all times and in all places he claim the office and dignity of a "Steward," that he show always that to him is *entrusted* the grace which he distributes.

The question of Absolution does not stand by itself, but is part of the general constitution of CHRIST'S Church, and must be examined in connection with the general law of God's dealings with a chosen people, to whom He assigns privileges which are not the property of mankind in general.

The state of CHRIST'S Church is in all respects an advance on that of the Mosaic Church, as that is an advance on the Patriarchal. This advance takes away nothing that mankind possessed before, but the increase of gifts is limited to those persons to whom they are given, and to those means by which they are conveyed.

Thus, under the Patriarchal Dispensation, *all* men could approach God in prayer with a good hope of acceptance.

Under the Mosaic, *some* men could approach JEHOVAH in *prescribed* ways with the *certainty* of acceptance.

Nothing was taken away. Those men who could have approached God before with a good hope, could do so equally now—outside the Jewish Dispensation, *but not within it*. God's mercy which had been before a general shallow flood, was now, *for the accepted people*, gathered within banks, and had become a deep stream; but it was narrowed as it was deepened.



The law of the Christian Church is an extension of these principles. Nothing hitherto given is taken away; no one is bound by Christian rules who is not within the special covenant; but all grace and all mercy *in it* is ministered to the peculiar people by the appointed ways.

This is the general law of God's Church, and the theory of Absolution follows this general law.

Natural religion teaches us that the merciful God forgives the penitent man.

The Patriarchal religion gives a warrant to this belief.

The Mosaic clears and certifies this warrant, but at the same time narrows it by the introduction of a sacrificial and mediatorial system.

The Christian religion declares absolutely the remission of sins through the Blood of CHRIST, and at the same time appoints not only channels of grace in the Sacraments and Christian ordinances, but Ambassadors of the Message and Stewards of the Mysteries.

The penitent absolved under the Christian Dispensation is in a state of far more perfect reconciliation than he could be under any other dispensation whatever, because he is in a covenant of forgiveness, and has a title to it by a special declaration from God. This title is assured to him in the first instance through Baptism, by which he is brought into the number of the reconciled—"We receive him into the congregation of CHRIST's flock." But if after Baptism he fall away, and the handwriting of judgment come out upon the wall of his soul, and he acknowledge it and is penitent, then he is forgiven. The eternal laws of God's kingdom would be violated were he not forgiven, because Forgiveness is one of the covenants of his Baptism,—one of the constitutions on which the Church of CHRIST as "the Gospel" is founded,—and without which it would not be "the Gospel." He Who founded a "Church of CHRIST," gave to that Church, as an essential part of it, a Ministry of reconciliation, a power of restoring penitent men to their former place, a commission to declare to the penitent what God has decreed in heaven. This is Absolution. It is essentially de-

claratory,—not a formal declaration, but an official act of the New Kingdom, by which the place of a reconciled and faithful subject, with all its grace and blessing, is again made over to the penitent; and it is by this, as by an official act, that the penitent, who is already forgiven by the action of the eternal laws of the Eternal Kingdom, is made, from a forgiven man, into a restored Christian.

The question naturally arises, Does the man, otherwise forgiven in heaven, forfeit his newly-obtained forgiveness if he refuse to seek Absolution, the official sign of it, at the hands of God's Ambassador on earth? Every analogy would lead us to suppose so. The penitent under the Patriarchal Dispensation might have been forgiven on his simple penitence, but the Jew certainly would not have been forgiven, had he not in addition offered the appointed sacrifices "which could never take away sins," because that was the way in which God had appointed him to plead his forgiveness. In the transition state between the Jewish and the Christian Dispensations, the leper cleansed without the intervention of the Priest was ordered by Him Who cleansed him to show himself to the Priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded,—no doubt, for the very reason which He gave for His own Baptism, "because thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness." And in the Christian Dispensation the antitype of these things,—the solemn institution, "WHOSE SINS SOEVER YE REMIT,"—would have been an idle and a useless form, had there been no office attached to the commission, or had the intervention of the person commissioned been unnecessary to the transmission of the message. An Ambassador of CHRIST implies an Embassy, a Steward of the Mysteries of God implies a Trust.

Again, if we take up the analogy of the kingdoms of this world, (and we may suppose that CHRIST intended us to take up this analogy, by so pointedly and so repeatedly calling His Church the Kingdom of God), the monarch, of his own free grace, pardons the traitor, and he is pardoned; but nevertheless the law would take its

course, and the traitor would forfeit his pardon did he refuse to plead it at the appointed courts, and before the appointed officers of the crown that has pardoned him : and most justly would he forfeit it. That act, mere ceremony as it is, is his homage, is his acknowledgment of the authority of the Crown, and by the very act of refusing to plead, he commits a fresh treason, and denies or despises the authority of the Crown that pardons him.

This general doctrine the Church of England holds in common with the Church of Rome ; the difference between them lies in the application and practice. The Church of Rome holds that a particular Absolution after private Confession is necessary for the restoration of the penitent ; the Church of England denies that this is either primitive or Scriptural doctrine, and says that *general* Confession and *general* Absolution are sufficient for the power of the Keys. These, therefore, she provides for all ; but retaining, as she does, the power of special Absolution, she limits it, as a strong spiritual cordial, to those cases of strong spiritual necessity which call for its exercise.

Before we come to consider the safest and most discreet manner of exercising the power vested in the Priest of the English Church, it is necessary to define accurately what the amount of that power is.

First, suppose the Absolution to be duly pronounced over a man not really penitent. We have the precise case in Scripture. "Peace be to this house," is one of the numerous forms of Absolution found in the Bible, since without forgiveness there can be no peace. "If the Son of Peace be there"—that is, if a man fit to receive peace be there—then the Absolution is confirmed,—peace rests on that house,—if not, then it returns to him who brought it.

Secondly, are none forgiven except those who have received the due form of Absolution pronounced by the duly-commissioned herald ? Certainly, many are. The servant is not above his Lord. The Ambassador cannot do more than the King Who gave him his commis-

sion. Many were forgiven in heaven to whom CHRIST pronounced no word of forgiveness. So it is now. There is a difference between not being able to plead the pardon of the Crown, and refusing to plead the pardon of the Crown. We must not imagine that Absolution by the Priest alters the sentence of God in heaven; it authoritatively conveys the certainty of it to the sinner's soul while on earth, without which he may have been forgiven by God, but while on earth he never would know it.

Thirdly, is this Absolution valid when pronounced by any other person than the priest? The meaning of the original word *κηρύσσειν*, and its Latin equivalent, *prædicare*, will declare this at once. "Can any be a HERALD except he be sent?" and "No man taketh this honour to himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron,"—that is to say, not called of God directly, but called, as Aaron was, by one commissioned by God to call him. Those whom CHRIST has sent, either personally or by the hands of those whom He has commissioned to send them, are His Ambassadors, and none else. We are so sent: therefore we are the Ambassadors of CHRIST, and we, and none else, carry His message.

General Absolution is an application made by the penitent of the forms found in the Prayer Book and pronounced by the Priest. Special Absolution is defined to be the "ministry of God's Holy Word," which has been very fairly explained as a "particular application in particular cases of God's promises for the relief of a conscience burdened with any special sin."<sup>1</sup> It may be applied thus:—

JESUS CHRIST was sent by the FATHER to pronounce forgiveness of sins to the penitent.

JESUS CHRIST commissioned others to act in His Name—"As My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you." He continues the succession of commissioned Ministers beyond the life of those then on earth—"Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

Therefore, JESUS CHRIST, Who has sent us, and is

<sup>1</sup> Statement of the Plymouth Clergy.



with us always, has sent us especially to pronounce forgiveness on the special penitent before us.

For this purpose His Scriptures, which contain many instances of the delivery of similar messages, either by CHRIST Himself or by His commissioned servants, supply us with the authorised form of words which we, His authorised servants, and none else, are commissioned to deliver.

It will be seen, therefore, that, though the Church of England repudiates the *practice* of the Church of Rome with respect both to Confession and Absolution, as unwarranted by Scripture and dangerous, yet that she claims precisely the same *power*, by virtue of her commission, as that which in *theory* is claimed by Rome itself, and on fitting occasions exercises it in the same manner. And this is her warrant.

Take these three sentences.

1. "Receive ye the HOLY GHOST: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."—S. John xx. 22, 23.

2. "Receive the HOLY GHOST, for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands: whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."—*Prayer Book, Ordination Service.*

3. "By His (CHRIST'S) authority committed unto me I absolve thee from all thy sins."—*Prayer Book, Visitation Service.*

The first of these sentences recognises the power of pronouncing forgiveness of sins, as lodged in the hands of man by GOD Himself.

The second recognises that power as vested in the Priests of the English Church, by the tenour of their commission.

The third recognises the actual exercise of that power by the Priests so commissioned.

It is absolutely necessary that all this should be plainly and distinctly set forth before the catechumens who are preparing for Confirmation. It is the first practical ex-



perience they have of a great and essential doctrine of the Church. No doubt they have heard before this, that CHRIST is willing to receive again, on their true repentance and faithful desire of amendment, those who, having vowed themselves His soldiers and servants, have nevertheless deserted Him, and rebelled against Him. They have heard also that on such occasions He sends His forgiveness by those whom He calls His Ambassadors, men chosen indeed from among the people, but sanctified to Him for this particular purpose. They have heard this, but up to the present time it has been to them a mere theory, which, as it has never been applied to their own cases, they have very imperfectly realised. As soon, therefore, as they begin to feel the personal nature of their own responsibilities, and the weight of their own sins, so soon they must be shown Who it is that pardons them, and how it is that He does it. There is not only present relief and comfort in this, but there is a lesson to be learnt also, which may be treasured up for after life; they must be taught the resources which the Church puts into their hands, and they must learn how to make use of them, should occasion require.

But while this doctrine is carefully and practically taught, it is not only unnecessary, but highly inexpedient, that the more personal and special forms of Absolution should be used. The case of those who, having neglected the ordinance of Confirmation, seek it in after life, is altogether exceptional, but among our younger catechumens it very seldom happens that the sins they have to speak about press so heavily on their consciences, or have become so confirmed and habitual, as to require a special Absolution. Of all things, religious excitement is the frame of mind which is most carefully to be avoided, while, at the same time, the lesson most especially to be taught, is that they should know how to seek their comfort in the ordinary provision which the Church has made for them.

Reserving therefore to ourselves in this case, as in every other, the full power of exercising the commission

granted us by the English Church, we should not scruple to apply it in any form which the Bible or Prayer Book warrants, to any case which we judged as requiring it. But in the exercise of our discretion, we do invariably refer our younger catechumens for their Absolution, to that particular form of it which they hear pronounced in the morning and evening services; but more especially to that which they are expecting to partake of in the office for the Communion. We teach them then and there to receive, with thankful hearts, the message from God, which we, His Ambassadors, are authorised to convey to them. We instruct them to apply this message of forgiveness to those particular sins which they have been confessing to us. We do this because, according to the best of our judgment, we believe it to be most in accordance with the intentions of the Prayer Book so to do, and most useful to the young persons whom we are instructing in the discipline of their Church.

We do, however, exhibit to them also the special forms of Absolution, and show them how they may be used, and when they may be necessary, but we never do this without explaining to them that they are just as fully and just as completely forgiven by a due appropriation to their own case of the general forms which they hear pronounced every day, as they would be by any private or particular Absolution whatever: so that when we meet them in after life, they do not desire that which to them is unnecessary, because they have been fully taught, that no wit of man can frame a form of Absolution more full, more perfect, and more complete than that which they possess in the ordinary services of the Church, which by faith and penitence they may always make their own, and which, when so appropriated, is not the less their own because it is shared with hundreds of others faithful as themselves, or because it is pronounced over hundreds of men who are unworthy of it, and incapable of receiving it. They wish for no such special and personal form as that which they see in the Visitation Service, and to which others erroneously attach a greater value and im-

portance, because they have been shown that it is the very same thing which they possess themselves, only adapted to a duller apprehension, or a more diseased conscience : a stimulant, in fact, well suited to cases of unnatural depression or unreasonable fears, or recovery from a long-continued habit of definite acts of sin, but neither necessary, nor wholesome, nor desirable, for quiet, sober-minded faithful Christians like themselves.

This is a lesson very generally overlooked, and in practice very generally forgotten ; but it is a lesson just as necessary to be taught as any other, and there is no time so good for teaching it, because there is no time in which it can be taught so strikingly and practically, as during the period of preparation for Confirmation. It seems strange that people should require to be reminded that forgiveness of sins, if it be any thing at all, must be *forgiveness*, under whatever form it is conveyed, and under no form can be any thing more than forgiveness ; that one expression of it may be more fitting in one case, and another in another case ; but that the Church has no more three Absolutions than she has three Creeds. It is strange that people cannot see this ; but they do not. Clergymen, even, who ought to understand the rationale of their own Prayer Book, if any do, will shrink from using the Absolution in the Visitation Service, not because they consider it too exciting for the particular state of mind in the penitent, but because they are afraid of arrogating to themselves a greater power than CHRIST has given them, as if it were a greater exercise of authority to pronounce forgiveness to one penitent, than it is to pronounce it to hundreds. A very little reflection would convince them of the soundness of Bishop Sparrow's explanation, which both they and their flocks would do well to study. "All these several forms," says the Bishop, "in sense and virtue are the same. For as when a prince hath granted a commission to any servant of his, to release out of prison all penitent offenders whatsoever, it were all one in effect as to the prisoners' discharge, whether this servant says, 'By virtue of a commission granted to me under the prince's hand and

seal which I here show, I release this prisoner ;' or thus, 'The prince who hath given me this commission, he pardons you ;' or, lastly, 'The prince pardon and deliver you,' the prince standing by and confirming the word of his servant. So it is here all one as to the remission of sins in the penitent, whether the Priest absolves him after this form,—' Almighty God, Who hath given me and all Priests power to pronounce pardon to the penitent, *He pardons you ;*' or thus, 'By virtue of a commission granted to me from God, *I absolve you ;*' or, lastly, 'God pardon you, namely, by me, His servant, according to His promise.' All these are but several expressions of the same thing, and are effectual to the penitent in virtue of that commission—S. John xx. 'Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted ;' which commission in two of these forms is expressed, and in the last, namely, that of the Communion, is sufficiently implied and supposed."

That Church which recognises holy Baptism, has already admitted the principle of Absolution at the hands of the Priest to its fullest extent. That Priest who has ever baptized, has remitted sins in his character of CHRIST's ambassador, to an extent that he can reach on no other occasion whatever. In fact, the words Baptism and Absolution as cause and effect were originally used indiscriminately to signify the act of Baptism. In one of the Canons of the Council of Rome, it is said that "at the Easter Festival, remission of sins (meaning Baptism, as is evident from the context) may be administered by either Presbyter or Deacon in the parish church, the Bishop being present."<sup>1</sup>

Again, Augustine thus speaks of Baptism :—"Baptisma quod est Sacramentum remissionis peccatorum."<sup>2</sup>

It is perfectly evident from the very essence of Baptism, that it must be so, and we detract not only from the completeness of the "one Baptism for the remission of sins," but from the power of the keys itself, whether we hesitate at the declaratory form of the Visitation

<sup>1</sup> Con. Rom. Canon vii., quoted by Cotellerius in his "Apostolical Fathers."

<sup>2</sup> De Baptismate, Book v. Ch. 21.



Service, or whether we consider the precatory form of the Communion Service as an inferior or less perfect absolution.

No one, I suppose, doubts that the power of the keys was both completely understood, and fully acted upon in the Primitive Church. Yet we have no instance of a declaratory form of Absolution before the twelfth century. The very title which the Absolution bears in the Liturgy of S. James is εὐχὴ τοῦ ἱλασμοῦ—the PRAYER of Propitiation—and its wording is quite in accordance with its title:—"And whereinsoever Thy servants have erred from Thy Commandments, in word or deed, as men carrying flesh about them, and living in the world, or seduced by the instigations of Satan, or whatever curse or particular anathema they are fallen under, I *pray and beseech* Thine ineffable goodness, to absolve them with Thy Word, and to remit their curse and anathema according to Thy mercy. O LORD and Master, hear my prayers for Thy servants, . . . for Thou art He that hath commanded *us*, saying, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," &c.

Precisely similar in its character is the form of Absolution published by Illyricus and Cardinal Bona, from an old Latin Missal. "Qui mulieri peccatrici omnia peccata dimisit lachrymanti, et latroni ad unam confessionem claustra aperuit paradisi, ipse suæ redemptionis vos participes ab omni vinculo peccatorum *absolvat* et membra aliquatenus debilitata medicinâ misericordiæ sanata corpori sanctæ Ecclesiæ redeunti gratiâ *restituât*, atque in perpetuum solidata *custodiat*."

For assigning the date of from 1200 to 1230 to the introduction of the declaratory form of Absolution, we have the testimony of S. Thomas Aquinas, who is writing in defence of it. He says, that there was a learned man in his time, who found fault with the indicative form of Absolution then used by the Priest—"I *absolve thee from all thy sins*"—and "would have it to be delivered only by way of deprecation, alleging . . . that only thirty years were past since all did use this form



only, 'Absolutionem et remissionem tribuat tibi Omnipotens DEUS.'"<sup>1</sup>

Aquinas is perfectly right in his defence, the *doctrine* was not modern, though the *form of words* might be so. The Church which was warranted by Scripture in authorising her Priests to say, "Child of wrath, I baptize thee"—that is to say, I convey to thee a full and perfect remission of all sins, was certainly warranted in authorising those same priests to say, Child of grace, I absolve thee, or convey to thee a conditional remission of repented sins, upon the principle of *omne majus in se continet minus*; even if the Priest was not warranted in so doing, without any such express sanction, by the mere tenour of his commission, and the analogy of the two cases. And, the identity of the doctrine being shown, the Church of any particular country has a perfect right to clothe it in any form of words which she may consider most fitting or most beneficial to her own children.

But this admission of Aquinas proves thus much, that the two forms are intended to convey, and do convey, precisely the same meaning; because if they did not, then the more modern expression would imply a doctrine which the Church had not recognised up to the time of its being adopted, and that, on the well known principle of S. Vincent of Lerins, would alone be sufficient to condemn it; but this argument, which would have fallen with crushing force in the thirteenth century, and which could not have escaped his opponents had there been the smallest ground for it, is not so much as hinted at. It is the new practice, not the new doctrine that is spoken of.

It follows, therefore, that if the Church of England, acquiescing in this theory, has retained *both* these forms in her services; if the comparatively modern form "*ego te absolvo*" of the Visitation Office, conveys precisely the same doctrine as the more ancient expression, *Absolvat te Omnipotens DEUS*, used in the Communion; then she considers that occasions may happen in which

<sup>1</sup> Aquin. Opusc. xxii. chap. 5. Ussher's "Answer to the Jesuit." Bingham, Antiq.

one or other of them will best convey the heavenly message to the soul of the sinner. In all cases, therefore, not absolutely specified in the Prayer Book, the English Priest is, and must be, perfectly at liberty to use whichever of the two modes of expression thus sanctioned by his Church he considers best adapted to the particular case before him. They both mean the same thing, but they have been modified by the Church, for the purpose of adapting that meaning to different comprehensions. But on this very same consideration he is also bound to weigh and consider the requirements of each particular case, and the character of each particular individual, not entirely by his own judgment, but with reference to the general intention of his Church; and to clothe the message of forgiveness in that particular form of words, which, according to his judgment, would be most in accordance, not with his own private ideas, but with the teaching of his Church in that particular case.

*Note.*—It has been objected that this principle of “*omne majus in se continet minus*” applied to Baptism and Absolution, would give a sanction to Lay Absolution, (which, in the case of the English Church, would be Schismatical Absolution,) from the fact that the Church does, on certain occasions, admit the validity of Lay Baptism.

Whether, in committing to her laity, under any consideration whatever, that which was committed to her priests alone by CHRIST, she has, or has not, the warrant of Scripture, is a point on which I do not feel myself competent to enter. I am content to take the decision of the Church as I find it, and to accept the validity of lay Baptism on the authority of the Church, though I can myself discover no authority for it in the Bible.

Whether the sanction she has given to laymen, in the subject of Baptism, in order to meet cases of emergency and imminent danger, can properly be applied to cases of heretical or schismatical Baptism, where no such imminent danger or emergency of any kind exists; that is to say, whether the grace of God is to be obtained by a quibble, is a point on which it is not neces-

sary for me now to speak, as it does not come within my subject.

But admitting all this,—admitting that the non-prohibition of Scripture, the very doubtful custom of the Church, and the possible emergency of the case, gives a sort of sanction to schismatical Baptism ; this is no argument whatever in a different case, even though that case be one of less absolute importance, because in this case neither the warrant of Scripture, nor the custom of the Church, nor the emergency of the case can be pleaded, in order to justify the irregularity.

## THE PARSON'S NOTE-BOOK.

Most Parsons keep—all ought to keep—a note-book of their catechumens; for as these come, and must come to him at irregular times, it is absolutely impossible for him to call to mind at once the subject of his last conversation, or even the necessary particulars of their respective situations, capacities, advantages, and peculiar temptations, unless he has some written memoranda to refer to.

He ought, therefore, to keep a book in some place easy of access in his study, in which the names of the catechumens are arranged alphabetically, allowing a page for each, and putting the name written plainly on the top of each page. A common copy-book will answer the purpose.

Under this he will write a short account of the catechumen in question. Where he resides—what is his present employment—what class he belonged to at school—supposing him to be a parishioner; if not, as is generally the case with servants, where he has been educated—(and very frequently the entry here will be “nowhere, he is unable to read and write.”) Whether they are or are not perfect in their Catechism—who and what are their fathers or their masters—whether they have sponsors alive who will undertake to teach them—and at what days and hours their respective employments will permit them to attend at the vicarage, the school-room, or the Church.

A single glance at this, whenever the individual is announced, shows at once how to adapt the teaching or conversation to the catechumen as an individual, and

prevents the Parson from falling into those generalities, which, however useful in a lecture, are unsuitable for a private conference.

The date of each visit must be noted down, and the subject of conversation. I say *subject* rather than *subjects*, for the Parson will always do well to confine himself to one subject at a time. Without some such note, the Parson would be altogether unable to take up the thread of his conversation at the next visit of his catechumen, as in all probability he will, before that happens, have seen thirty or forty others, and conversed with them on subjects totally different.

After two or three conversations, the catechumen may be classed with five or six others of nearly equal abilities and similar habits; he may then be committed to the care of one of the catechists, a note of it being made in the Parson's book. This will not stop his visits to the parsonage, because the office of the catechist is simply instruction. As soon as the class is formed, the most intelligent of each party should be selected as a sort of choregus, to perform the mechanical part of the business, such as assembling the class, ascertaining about absentees, communicating between the Parson and the catechist, giving out the examination papers, and collecting the answers. Some such arrangement as this will be found to diminish very materially the labour both of the Parson and of the Curate. The catechist should, of course, be furnished with such extracts from the Parson's book, as he may think advisable to communicate to him, but he must also keep a small note-book of his own.

A few extracts from an actual note-book would make this much more clear than any amount of description; but it is very difficult to select cases which may, without impropriety, be made public, because in every case a good deal of the conversation will turn naturally on the past sins of the individual in question, and the temptations incident to his particular situation in life: that is to say, will partake of the nature of the confessional, and must be held as sacred.



On looking over my own note-book, for the purpose of selecting examples, it seems to me that all those extracts which would be most useful for my purpose, would describe the individual in question so clearly, that any of the parishioners meeting with the book, would easily detect the real persons through any disguise of initial or pseudonym that I might make use of.

It must be understood, therefore, that the following extracts are real *bonâ fide* extracts, but that they are not the most characteristic, nor the best that could be selected for purposes of illustration :—

### E. R. (Female.)

Formerly monitor of second class, national school—Knows and understands the Catechism perfectly—No father—Mother church-going, but not a Communicant—No sponsors—Lives at home, and does shirt working—Can come at any time.

March 7. Conversed on the connection of Confirmation and the LORD's Supper—E. anxious to receive the latter—Mother unwilling to permit her.

March 8. E. and Mother—Addressed the latter on the precarious state of her own health—Communion, a type of, and preparation for, Judgment and a blessed Resurrection.—(Successful.)

March 10. E. and Mother. Peculiar temptations of her situation—Divine grace—How to be obtained—Admitted—Classed with A. B., C. D., E. F., and G. H.—E. R. undertakes to be the catechist of this class.

### F. C. (Male.)

Stranger—Very ignorant, but willing—Comes with his master, who is also his godfather, but who is nearly as ignorant as himself.

April 11. The meaning of taking our vows upon ourselves.

April 14. The necessity of the Creed, to those who cannot read the Bible especially. (Mem. to ask A. Z. to teach them the Creed.)

April 17. Prayer—Can say the LORD's Prayer—Explained it.

F.C. never could learn the Commandments, but seemed to have a good idea of duty.—(Ultimately admitted.)

E. T.

Well informed—Formerly monitor of the first class—On the point of going to service for the first time.—(N.B. The family where she is going very indifferent Church goers.)

April 11. The trials which await a person determined to carry out God's requirements in a family where they are not much observed—Peculiar dangers of spiritual pride under such circumstances—The duty more pressing on those who are better informed—Strength to do so to be sought from God—Strength from Confirmation—Nourishment from Communion—Admitted—Requested to take charge of a class.

A. F. (Male.)

Formerly first class, National School—Catechism nearly forgotten, also much of his reading—Father labourer, Church goer—Infrequent Communicant—Father and son work for Mr. X.—Godmother regular Communicant, but very ignorant—Comes any evening after work hours.

March 9. Baptismal vow.

March 18. What we are to believe.

March 21. Duties of CHRIST's soldiers—and servants.

March 23. Last Day—Judgment—Communion of Saints—Sacrament of Communion—Example of his godmother.

Admitted—Classed with C. D., and E. F., and under A. B. catechist—Spoke to godmother, who is aunt to A. F.; about the duty of bringing him to the LORD's Supper.

L. M. (Female.)

Stranger—No relations near, nor sponsors—Lives as servant to Mrs. Z., who is very careful and attentive to her—Intelligent and religious—Catechism imperfect.

March 3. At her last place the people were Dissenters, and, though she had been educated at —— National School, she had adopted their notions, but wants to be confirmed, because it is *right*.

Dangers of schism—Impossibility of belonging to two communions—Marked for her 1 S. John xvii., 1 Cor. i. and iii.

March 10. Dangers of hearing at the same time different interpretations of the same Scriptures—*i. e.*, of attending Church and meeting-house too.

March 11. Subject resumed—L. M. will not consent to leave the meeting-house.

March 12. Conversation with Mrs. Z.—Advised her to permit her servant to go to meeting-house, and by no means to urge her to come to Church.

Rejected—(schism)—after a reference to the chapters before mentioned; also to Tit. iii. 10, explaining that heresy in the Bible signifies “choice.” Acts xxvi. 5; 1 Cor. xi. 19.

M. H. (Female.)

Well brought up in all respects—Religious family—Well taught in Catechism—1st class, N. S.—Very timid.

March 10. Meaning of the word “worthy.” 1 Cor. xi.

March 11. The *right* we have to expect God’s forgiveness on our repentance—Meaning of the words “right” and “repentance.”

Admitted—placed in G. H.’s class. [Mem.—Special instructions to G. H. that encouragement is necessary. Her mother engages to bring her to Confirmation, and to the Communion afterwards.]

J. B. (Female.)

Catechism imperfect—Removed early from the National School—Family remarkable for industry—J. B. herself very attentive to her younger brothers and sisters generally, and particularly when there was an infectious sickness in the family—Strangely indifferent on religious subjects, but has shown herself capable of great self-denial.

March 6. Her own ill health—Uncertainty of life—  
A sister she had lost—Communion of Saints.

March 8. Necessity of prayer—Of set times for it—  
Of public prayer—Of special prayer.

March 11. Martha and Mary—Martha not refused—  
Permission given us to serve CHRIST by our works  
towards our fellow creatures—Difference between  
serving our fellow creatures and serving CHRIST  
through our fellow creatures.

Gave her two very ignorant girls to teach, and admitted her on condition that she taught them diligently.

These extracts might be multiplied to any extent, but what I have given are quite sufficient to show the principle upon which the Parson's notes must be made. No two catechumens' minds, situations, temptations, or advantages are alike; every one, therefore, is a separate study, and must be treated differently. Of course, this is not an easy part of a Parson's duty,—indeed, it is one which no one can perform in a manner altogether satisfactory to himself; but the better acquainted he is with his people, the better he will be able to perform it.

One very great use in the periodical examinations which take place preparatory to Confirmation is the greater insight which it gives the Parson into the state of his parish; many persons are benefited by it besides the catechumens, and he who is benefited most is the Parson himself.

## CONVERSATIONS.

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### I.

#### THE MEANING OF CONFIRMATION.

"WELL, George," said the Parson, "what do you want with me to-night?"

"I hear that the Bishop is coming, sir," said George, "and I want to be confirmed. I think I am old enough now to take my godfather's and godmother's promises on my own shoulders; do you not think I am, sir?"

George was a carpenter's apprentice in the town, and a very good specimen of the apprentice class, he was steady at Church, fond of reading, and, having been employed in the choir before his voice had broken, he had picked up during the Sunday catechisings a little more religious knowledge than usually falls to his class, though not perhaps knowledge of the most accurate description, as indeed the Parson judged by his answer; for the time, however, he let it pass.

"Very good," said he, "but tell me what you want to be confirmed for?"

This was not exactly the question which George had expected, and he looked considerably puzzled. "Yes," said the Parson, "you know that this will give you a good deal of trouble; you are at work all day, and if you want a ticket for Confirmation, you will have to give up your evening cricket, and come here and learn and answer questions; you have got a good deal to do,



and some little self-denial to exercise, for you are fond of cricket, and, to tell you the truth, I am glad to see that you are so ; now no one makes up his mind to give up what he likes, without expecting to get some good by it. What good do you expect yourself from Confirmation?"

"I do not know much good," said George, "but it is my duty to confirm the promises made for me at my Baptism, and I don't mind a little trouble to do my duty."

"Well said, my boy: a right good English answer. It is my belief that the reason why the English race is spreading over the whole world, and prospering wherever it spreads, is contained in that one answer, we do not mind a little trouble so long as we do our duty; keep that before you through life, and I shall see you a master man some of these days, and a good man too. But what do you mean by confirming the promises made at your Baptism?"

"Why," said George, rubbing up his Catechism, "'my godfathers and godmothers, at my Baptism, did promise and vow three things in my name; first, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; secondly, that I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith; and, thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.' Now I think that they said just what I ought to do, and so, now that I am able to judge for myself, I want to go to the Bishop and confirm the covenant they made for me when I was too young to make it for myself."

"Very good, George, and a very proper thing to do. You know of course what is meant by a covenant?"

"Yes," said George, "an agreement between two parties. I remember your telling me that, and saying it was just like what father made for me with master when he apprenticed me. Master was one party, and I was the other."

"And you think that this agreement which your

sponsors made for you, when God was one party, and you the other, the very best they could have made?"

"Yes," said George, "and that is why I want to confirm it."

"But, George," said the Parson, "have you never confirmed it before?"

"No," said George, "I could not, I was not old enough when the Bishop was here last. I went to see the Confirmation though, and thought I should like to be confirmed too."

"You have just repeated the promises made for you; can you give me the meaning of them in three words?"

"Repentance, faith, and obedience," said George, who had been thinking over the Parson's Sunday explanations before he came.

"Very true," said the Parson; "very well remembered; have you never said the Confession at Church? I need not ask you though, for I remember when you were in the choir how distinctly you used to say it; but did you not think of its meaning when you said it? did you not think of your own particular sins when you used those words?"

"I hope I did," said George, "and that I do every time I say my prayers."

"I hope so too," said the Parson; "but it seems to me that whenever you do so, you confirm one of the promises made for you at your baptism,—Repentance.—I think too, you repent for yourself, it is not your godfathers and godmothers who are repenting for you when you make the confession."

This seemed a new view of the case to George.—"And," continued the Parson, "when you say the Creed, which you do, I believe, every day, do you not confirm the promise which your godfathers and godmothers made about your faith? and when you make the responses to the Commandments on Sunday, do you not confirm the promises they made for you about obedience? The fact is, as soon as ever you begin to know the difference between right and wrong, and that I think children begin to do at two or three years of

age, then you begin to 'renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in your own person, and acknowledging yourself bound to believe and to do all those things which your godfathers and godmothers then undertook for you.' "

George looked down for some time without speaking, trying to realise this new idea of Confirmation.

"Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do as they have promised for thee?" said the Parson, in the words of the Catechism.

George answered mechanically—"Yes, verily, and by God's help, so I will."

"Why," said the Parson, "you have just confirmed the promises again, and you confirmed them every time you repeated these words in the Catechism; in fact, you can perform no one single act of religion without confirming them; as soon as you are old enough to perform an act of religion, you are old enough to confirm your promises."

"But does not the Bishop ask me that same question when I go to Confirmation? I have read it in the service."

"Of course he does; have I not just told you that you can perform no act of religion without it? God is now going to entrust to you another great and precious talent; do you not think it a natural question before He gives it you, that He should ask you by the mouth of His servant the Bishop, what you have done with the last talent He gave you? That is not Confirmation, it is only seeing whether you are worthy to receive Confirmation, which He is going to give you. Besides, you told me you wished to be confirmed. Is that word active or passive?"

"Passive," said George.

"That is to say, to be confirmed is something that is done to you, not something that you do. Do you not suppose that if Confirmation meant what you imagine, it would be said that you were going to confirm, not going to *be* confirmed?"

"Then what is Confirmation?" said George.

"What is firm?" said the Parson.

"Strong, I suppose."

"Very true; then to confirm is to strengthen; to be confirmed is to be strengthened; and Confirmation is strengthening. Now tell me who is it that strengthens the soul?"

"God," said George, reverently.

"Yes, God, the HOLY GHOST, confirms the soul sending His grace by the hand of His messenger the Bishop, just as God the SON forgives, sending His absolution by the hands of His messenger the Priest. You were quite right in what you said just now, about your duty, speaking generally, and I praised you for it; but you do not go to Confirmation to perform a duty of any kind, you go to receive a blessing; the blessing will impose a duty upon you: you must now do something more for God than you did before, because He has now given you more strength to serve Him; but every blessing of every kind that we have from God is gratuitous; do you understand that word?"

"Not exactly," said George.

"Free grace, which is a common expression enough, but not an expression commonly understood, means that we receive the blessing without having done anything of ourselves to deserve it, and that is the case with every blessing.

"Now, if God gave us the strength of Confirmation, because we had kept the promises made at our baptism, then Confirmation would be no free grace, because it would be a payment for work done, greater, no doubt, than the work deserved, but still a payment. God gave us one blessing at our baptism freely, that is to say for nothing, or rather for JESUS CHRIST's sake; He washed away our sins, and gave us innocence when we had done nothing to deserve it; that blessing imposed a duty upon us, and every time we confirmed our promises, either by word or deed, we performed that duty.

"Now God sees that we want an additional blessing, strength; we have not earned that blessing, we have done nothing to deserve it; at the very most we have

only done the duty imposed upon us by our last blessing, and very few can say they have done that. But God sees that our temptations are now stronger, and, for CHRIST's sake, He gives us what He sees we want, to enable us to resist them. No doubt this is another talent, and He will say, 'occupy till I come,' or 'let Me have My own with increase.' You must be a better man for what you receive, but do not take God's work for your work, and think you are going to confirm, when, in truth, you are going to be confirmed."

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## II.

### THE USE OF CONFIRMATION.

"WELL, Harry, so you want to be confirmed," said the Parson, "what made you think of coming?"

"Why the Prayer Book says that when we can say the Catechism, we should be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed, and when I heard that the Bishop was coming here this spring, I thought I would do what the Prayer Book tells me, and I can say my Catechism all through, and I think I understand it."

"I think you do, Harry," said the Parson, "I have been much pleased with your answers lately, they show thought and earnestness, and I must say your reason is a very good one. The Prayer Book shows what the mind of the Church is; it shows what her wisest directors have thought good for her people, century after century. These things have been well considered over and over again, and by practical men too, who tried themselves what they wrote for the direction of others. Ignorant as we may be, we are safe enough in following them, but though ignorance may be safe enough in following the guidance of these holy men, if God has given



us understanding and means of learning, it is better that we should try and make ourselves acquainted with the principles on which these holy men acted. A blind man may thank God that he has got a safe guide to lead him on the path to heaven, but he would follow that very guide better and with firmer steps, if he had the use of his own eyes as well.

"Let us see the principle of God's dealings with us. The Bible tells us to work out our own salvation; are we able to do so?"

"I suppose," said Harry, "the Bible would hardly tell us to do that which we are unable to do?"

"Very true," said the Parson, "there is no reason why we should not do what S. Paul did; and he, you know, could do all things." Here the Parson paused, and looked at Harry, who, without hesitation, continued the text—"Through CHRIST which strengthened him."

"Exactly," said the Parson, "and that is the key to the whole doctrine of the Gospel; that man can do nothing by himself, but can do anything and everything because he is made one with CHRIST, just as your hands could not move a finger if they were cut off from the body, but are quite able to earn you a very respectable livelihood through the strength they get from your body.

"That is the first principle, and the second is, that God gives us, day by day, our daily bread; that is to say, as much as we want every day, but nothing to waste, nothing which we do not want, we have enough of God's grace to do the work that He puts us to, if He adds to our work He adds to His grace, if He takes away this work, He does not continue to give grace that would now be of no use. We have received the HOLY GHOST as well as the early Christians. You cannot do all that He enabled them to do."

"No," said Harry, "I cannot speak with tongues."

"Have you any idea why?" said the Parson.

"Because I have to show forth the power of His kingdom to Englishmen only, and other tongues would be of no use to me in furthering that work."

"Very true, and suppose it came within the plan of

God's Providence, that there should be a sudden extension of His kingdom, do you not suppose that the HOLY GHOST, Who has already made your body His temple, would be able to fit you for the work?"

"I suppose so," said Harry.

"Of course He could," said the Parson. "Which is the greater gift, the power of resisting the devil, or the power of speaking foreign languages?"

Harry caught the idea. "To be sure," said he, "He who gave me the greater would certainly give me the less if it were necessary."

"Then the idea I want you to fix in your mind, is that God gives us always just what we want in all stages of our life, and whenever He sets us at a new work, He gives us new tools to work with. It is just the same with everything else, we need not confine it to His spiritual gifts. When do children first have teeth?"

"When their food first wants biting," said Harry.

"That is, in fact, S. Paul's own illustration. Why did he say he had fed the Corinthians with milk, and not meat?"

"Because they had not been able to bear it," said Harry.

"Precisely so," said the Parson. "You would see it at once if we were speaking of ordinary work and common life. In this world a man is fitted and strengthened to do his own particular work, and consequently each man works best at his own trade. You are not so strong in the arms as the blacksmith."

"No," said Harry, "to be sure I am not. I was once though, but his arm is got so strong now by use."

"Do not accustom yourself to speak of things so thoughtlessly. Nothing gets stronger by use; that chair that you are sitting on has had use enough in its time, but I do not see that it has grown stronger by it. That man's calling, the state of life in which God placed him required greater strength in his arms than would be sufficient for you or for other men: he had not that strength naturally, but he showed himself in earnest in his work by doing his best, with the strength

which God had given him already, and then God strengthened his muscles to enable him to do more. Man can only mend what man has made. You can strengthen the leg of that table, but cannot strengthen your own leg.

"This is my second principle, and now we will state the two together.

"They are simply,

"1. That God gives us whatever is necessary for performing the duties He sets before us.

"2. That He does not give us any thing till the time comes when we want it.

"And now to apply these principles to the work before us.

"How many Sacraments does the Catechism say are necessary to the salvation of CHRIST's Church?"

"Two," said Harry. "Baptism and the Supper of the LORD."

"What do you mean by necessary to Salvation?"

"That without which men cannot be saved."

"Say Churchmen," said the Parson, "you know nothing about God's dealings with those who do not belong to the Church: He may have many means of saving men that we know nothing of. We are talking now about His covenanted methods, and these covenants are made with His Church, and with none else.

"You say right, however, there are two Sacraments necessary to every churchman's salvation, for this is the real meaning of the expression 'generally necessary'; how is it that hitherto you have received only one of them?"

"I suppose the Church thought that hitherto I wanted only one of them," said Harry.

"Yes," said the Parson, "every one born into the world, is born a child of Adam, and in Adam's nature; nothing tending towards salvation can be done for man while in that state, for we can do nothing of ourselves to help ourselves; it is a state of wrath and condemnation, and therefore the Sacrament which takes us out of that state, is necessary for us from the very first. We must

be *justified*, that is to say, regarded in the light of just persons by God, before He will give us any spiritual help whatever ; we are justified, therefore, for CHRIST's sake, in the Sacrament which He has appointed for that purpose.

“ We are no doubt exposed to temptations during our childhood, and weak as these may be in comparison with those which will beset us when we come to maturity, neither in childhood nor in manhood are we able of ourselves to help ourselves. But God has not left us without help, He has given us parents, who are to the child what God Himself is to the man—the guide, the instructor, the reprover, the help in need ; these are sufficient for the ordinary trials that beset the age of childhood. The strengthening and refreshing of the soul by the Body and Blood of CHRIST, is not yet required. But when we leave our homes, when we start on our separate courses through life, when the authority of the parent becomes weakened, while the temptations of advanced life become stronger, then it is that we require additional strength from God, to enable us to resist them, and additional nourishment from God, to enable us to use that strength with effect. The first of these we receive in Confirmation, the second in the Holy Communion.”

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### III.

#### DANGERS OF HABITUAL CONFESSION.

THE Parson put down the paper musingly, and continued for some time in thought.

“ I must admit,” said he, “ that this appears to be a very fair transcript of your deeds and motives ; it is evidently honest ; it bears internal evidence of its honesty upon the face of it.”

"It is, I assure you," said H. "There is no sin that I can remember, either by thought, word, or deed, which is not recorded in that paper. I have kept it written up, day after day, and week after week, since I showed you my last."

"And there is no sin so chronicled of which you do not repent heartily?" said the Parson, interrogatively.

"Heartily," said H. "You can impose no penance upon me that I will not willingly undergo, in order to prove my sorrow and to earn God's forgiveness."

"God's forgiveness is a free gift," said the Parson, gravely; "it is not to be earned. No doubt it will not be given at all except to the penitent. To any but these it would indeed be valueless, for it would be no guarantee that you would not forfeit your salvation the very next hour. But you do not earn it even by inward penitence, still less by outward self-punishment. That was the idea of the Israelite who was ready to give the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul. It is not earned by any of these means; it was earned long ago by CHRIST, and if you receive it at all, you will receive it gratuitously, and for His sake alone."

"Yet the last time I showed you my conscience, and expressed to you my sincere repentance of all I had told you, and you, at my humble and hearty desire pronounced God's forgiveness, you gave me certain punishments, which I was to inflict upon myself. I performed every one of these tasks conscientiously. I repeated the Penitential Psalms every day. I increased the alms which I allot weekly."

"I did not consider these as punishments," said the Parson, interrupting him; "I advised them as remembrancers—to keep in your mind the fact, that you had sinned, and to prevent you from falling into sin again; but I should never have imagined that alms, and prayers, and thanksgivings, could be considered punishments. I am sure I did not intend them as such."

"No, not punishments," said H.; "but evidences of the sincerity of my repentance."

"That is the very thing that makes me reflect," said



the Parson. "Is your repentance sincere? I have prescribed these things to many, and have often found them efficacious; and many minor things of the same kind I have found efficacious also. I have often recommended, for instance, to a hasty-tempered person, to repeat the Lord's Prayer mentally before answering under provocation, and I have found a perceptible amendment arising from such practices. But in your case,—” here the Parson took up the paper that he had laid upon the table and looked over it again—"in your case it seems to me that your present catalogue of sins is very like your last. Now, repentance means amendment—works meet for repentance.”

H. looked down confused. "I am sure," he said, "I did repent, and do repent.”

The Parson held out the paper to him. "Do you know," said he, after some pause, "I wish you would not come to me for Confession as regularly as you do. You come to me before all the great Festivals, just as often as they come round. You bring me the same paper, and I fear that paper contains, time after time, the very same sins, both of omission and commission.”

"And yet you once taught me to come to you in my spiritual troubles—do you cast me off now?”

"I taught you to swim, too," said the Parson, "and I encouraged you to lean on the corks. Do you recollect why I took them away from you?”

"Yes," said H.; "you said that they were useful while I was learning how to strike out; but that I should never learn to support myself while I depended entirely on them.”

"Precisely," said the Parson; "and so I tell you now. I encouraged you to come to me, because I wanted to give you a habit of remembering your faults; for that is a thing that must be learnt—it does not come of itself. I wanted to show you how to guard against them—what preventives are best for any particular class of them; but now that you have learnt these things, if I were to give you my constant assistance and advice, you would never be able to guide yourself. What would

you do if death took me away from you, as it must some day or other? or what would you do if you were launched on the world to fight your way through it, as you will have to do? You must swim some time or other without your corks, whether you like it or not. I should be doing but half my duty towards you if I did not teach you to do so metaphorically, as I have done literally; and I do it by taking them away when you can do without them. At this very moment my support is doing you harm. You confess your sins; you receive God's forgiveness; and, practically, you consider your score wiped off and your judgment past; and so you go away without that watchfulness which prevents you from falling again into the same sins, because you imagine—not that you say so in so many words, even to yourself—but you do imagine, and you do act upon the idea, notwithstanding, that you have but to confess again, and to be forgiven again. Is it not my forgiveness that you seek, rather than God's? If you are kept from sin, is it not by fear of offending me rather than of offending CHRIST? And if you fall into sin so easily (as from this paper it is evident that you do), is it not because you are thinking of my forgiveness, and imagine that it is to be obtained easily? My duty is not to lead you to your SAVIOUR, but to show you how to seek your SAVIOUR for yourself."

"But do you cast me off, then? Am I never to come to you in the trials that beset me? What am I to do?"

The Parson smiled as he opened a Prayer Book that was lying on the table. "Do you pay so very little attention to that which you hear so often read in Church? 'If by this means he cannot quiet his own conscience, but requireth further help or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's Word, and open his grief.' Is that like casting you off? Should I be even justified in so doing by the very Prayer Book to which I have given my unfeigned assent and consent? Try yourself first in the way that I have taught you to try yourself—by the rule of God's

Commandments. These sins, which I see recurring far too often on your confession paper, are the very sins which you have in my presence already tried by that rule. Try them for yourself now; if you think a penance will preserve your watchfulness, set it for yourself; do not come to me. But if any unusual trial or temptation, or combination of circumstances occurs, then come to me at once, as you are invited by the Prayer Book, and we will apply the ministration of God's Word to your case. My time, my labour, my knowledge, my best advice shall be yours. But do not be coming to me periodically with matters that you can judge for yourself. Remember that when God gave you a conscience, and enlightened that conscience by the HOLY GHOST, He placed self-responsibility on your shoulders by the very act of giving you a judgment to try yourself by, and you are burying that talent in the earth; that is to say, you are committing a positive sin—a sin upon which the Bible affixes a penalty no less than the absolute loss of that talent, when you place the responsibility upon my shoulders instead of taking it upon your own."

H. looked but half satisfied; he could not deny the truth of the Parson's argument; there could be no doubt in the world that he did possess a conscience, or that the conscience of a baptized Christian must be a conscience especially enlightened by the HOLY GHOST, nor could he assign any reason why God should have given him a faculty, unless He intended him to use it himself. Still, he could not but feel helpless and deserted. In truth, the act of judging ourselves, and weighing the motives and consequences of our actions, is a severe mental labour which no one undertakes willingly. Nine out of ten neglect it entirely, and act from impulse; and when the necessity of such judgment begins to be felt, the first instinct of the conscientious man is to throw himself upon the judgment of another. Hence the practice of Confession, which, permitted in Scripture, and encouraged by the Church, has become, no doubt, part of its discipline, but has grown into it less as a matter

of actual precept than as a consequence of the natural wants and instincts of mankind.

"But," said H., somewhat shifting the subject, "are you not charged by Him Whose ambassador you are with a message to me? God has promised forgiveness of sins to the penitent, and has charged you to announce it to them. I am penitent, why do you refuse it to me?"

"If you are penitent, I do not refuse it."

"Surely. You forbid me to come to you confessing my sins; how can you then pronounce my pardon?"

"My young friend," said the Parson, "will you read your Prayer Book? will you study its meaning? will you appropriate to yourself that which is there set down for your benefit? When I say that 'our LORD JESUS CHRIST hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins,' when, having thus asserted my authority to pronounce forgiveness, I declare, 'He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe,' do I not then and there deliver to you, who declare yourself penitent and believing, that message which you say with great truth it is my duty to deliver to you, and your right to demand at my hands? But the truth is, what you want is not the calm assurance of laying to your own soul the gracious message of forgiveness sent by God to you and many others by our hands, but the excitement of the action, and that is the very thing which the Church considers unwholesome, and wishes to discourage as a general practice. It is a calm, equable flow of piety that she would encourage, not a periodical recurrence of great excitement and consequent prostration. My authority is precisely the same, and so is my message, whether I deliver it to you personally, or to you in common with many others; but the excitement is far greater when you are addressed individually. No doubt I, who have the authority to carry my Master's message to many, have, *a fortiori*, the authority to carry it to one; and according to my discretion I do exercise that authority. I have exercised it in your case before now, because in

the spiritual, as well as in the physical, there are times when excitement is beneficial, and even necessary. Special absolution is a strong spiritual cordial entrusted to my stewardship; but what would my Master say of my discretion if I fed His people upon cordials as their daily meat?"

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#### IV.

### LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

JOHN W. was Secretary to the Black Horse Benefit Society. He was a young man of character rather above the average—what is usually called a respectable person—but without any definite ideas of religion. In fact, he ought to have been confirmed three years ago; but as this would have been attended with some little trouble, John neglected it, and considered himself none the worse for it. He was, however, an honest, hard-working young man, and had been entrusted with the management of the Black Horse funds, in which situation he acquitted himself very creditably, but the necessity of periodical attendance at night in the public house had, it must be confessed, led him on one or two occasions into drunkenness. It was true that no liquor was allowed while the club business lasted; but there were generally a few unsteady members who, after it was closed, thought it necessary to do something for the "good of the house;" and poor John, whose steadiness was more a matter of habit than of principle, had been occasionally induced to join them.

Of late, however, he had become steadier, and on hearing the Parson give notice of Confirmation, he came to consult him about the matter.

The first thing the Parson mentioned was of course the baptismal covenant and "the pomps and vanity of



this wicked world, and the sinful lusts of the flesh," and this led the way very naturally to poor John's late exhibition of himself at the public house.

The Parson, who knew the young man's character, was ready enough to admit his excuses, but still urged the absurdity as well as impiety of applying to God for more grace, when that which He had given already was misused.

"The fact is, John," said the Parson, "if you expect God to help you, you must not put yourself into the way of temptation. That public house will be your ruin, and will turn God's grace to your destruction—Confirmation grace as well as any other."

"Then you would advise me to go less frequently?" said John.

"I wish," said the Parson, "that you would have strength of mind to give it up altogether. Resign the secretaryship: it has already exposed you to temptations which on two separate occasions you have been unable to withstand. In two distinct instances you have been led into sin; and though I will not take upon myself to say that it is sinful to be the secretary of a club that meets in a public house, yet if to you it is the beginning of sin, to you it is sinful, whatever it may be to others."

"But," said John, "these were only sins of infirmity. I repented of them heartily in both cases, and do still. If Confirmation means the imparting of Divine strength, may I not expect now to be more able to resist temptation than I have been hitherto?"

"What! if you seek it voluntarily?" said the Parson. "How can you pray to God consistently not to lead you into temptation, if you lead yourself into it? You must not suppose that Divine grace is like an inanimate article which you purchase or have given to you, and which you are the richer for, merely from the fact of your possessing it—and that, too, just as much whether you choose to make use of it or not. Divine grace is an animating principle, which if not used, is useless, and if useless is lost. The HOLY GHOST will give you judgment not to put yourself into the way of temptation, and

will comfort you with a sense of God's favour for the supposed loss you may experience in abstaining from it; but if you go against His suggestions, and run voluntarily into it yourself, whether you do that from presumption or from wilfulness, I do not see how you will be in any way stronger because you have been Confirmed. In putting yourself in a temptation which you have been warned against, you have misused the gift already; and *that gift* misused voluntarily, is, as you know very well, withdrawn."

John paused and considered—it was a great trial to him, he had not been much called upon to deny himself—it was a new idea to him altogether to abstain from that which is not sinful merely because it may possibly become a means of sin. And, willing to justify himself, he said, though with some little hesitation of manner, "But are we not led to expect that God with the temptation will make a way to escape? This is what I looked to in Confirmation."

"And you looked to no more than what God has promised," said the Parson: "to no more than what God is able and willing to perform. You are quite right; this is what God gives in Confirmation. As you grow older, you will find trials and temptations enough in this life of trial and temptation, without seeking them for yourself. When God tries, God will support. When God, for His own wise purposes, permits the devil to tempt us, God will at the same time give us strength to resist him; but when we try ourselves we must be our own defence, and when we ourselves invite the devil, we must seek in our own strength the means of resisting him. God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, there is no doubt of that; but then, on the other hand, we must not tempt God."

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## V.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"In this matter," said the Parson, "I think you have been rather weak than wicked. It is a sin of infirmity, and if your penitence be sincere, there is no reason why it should keep you from Confirmation. On the contrary, I should say that Confirmation or strengthening is the very thing you want. And if you make good use of the strength so acquired, and renew and nourish it by frequent Communion, I shall have great hopes of you."

"The Communion!" said E., "I had no idea of that. I am not fit for the Holy Communion yet."

"What do you mean by 'not fit?'" said the Parson.

"I am not steady enough nor circumspect enough in my conduct. If I were to receive the Communion and to fall into sin afterwards, that surely would be a very great increase to my wickedness."

"Of course it would," said the Parson; "it would be sinning against grace. But why should you fall into sins afterwards? you do not wish to do so, I suppose?"

"No, surely not; but I am afraid of my own weakness. I am not yet strong enough nor good enough."

"Of your own weakness? Yes," said the Parson. "I hope you are. That is the very reason why I urge the Communion. Make yourself one with CHRIST, Whose Body and Blood you receive into you, and then you need not talk about your own weakness. You can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth you."

"But what I fear is, that I am not good enough to receive CHRIST."

"What do you think of the conduct of the Gadarenes and Gergesenes?" said the Parson; "who, when they had ascertained beyond a doubt the power of CHRIST, besought Him to depart from their coasts. It was very well for Peter, in the days of his ignorance, to say, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O LORD;' but I

should hardly expect such a speech from a baptized and well-instructed Christian. You do not seem to understand the Christian principle. 'They that are whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick.' CHRIST gives His gifts freely, and He gives them to those who want them, that is to sinners. What He expects is, that they will use them when they have them."

Still E. continued murmuring something about not being good enough—for there is no idea more thoroughly ingrained into all classes than that of the Communion as a test of goodness, rather than a means of grace. Nor is there any notion more difficult to set right, because there really is a great deal of truth in it. Sin unrepented and unforgiven does turn the spiritual food into a deadly destruction, and it is extremely difficult in practice to make men understand the difference between unrepented sin present, and the fear of sin future.

"In what manner do you propose making yourself strong enough and good enough?" said the Parson. "I suppose you hope to receive the Holy Communion before you die, as you know that 'except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you have no life in you.' How do you mean, without CHRIST's grace, to make yourself good enough to receive CHRIST?"

This was a difficult question. Had the Parson put it in the usual form, the usual answer would probably have suggested itself, and something would have been said about repentance, and prayer, and reading the Bible—things which people are apt to imagine they can do of themselves—but when placed thus nakedly before him, the fact of a man making himself holy by his own unassisted efforts did not seem exactly that which E. had been accustomed to contemplate.

"The truth is," said the Parson, "what you propose to yourself is, in plain terms, salvation by works alone. You mean to attain a certain degree of goodness, and then to seek the LORD's Table by way of reward. To do something for God, and then to come to the Communion in proof that you have done it. This is not fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil with

the LORD's weapons—it is fighting with your own, and then coming to GOD and telling Him that you have done so.”

“But is not grace GOD's weapon—and will He not give me that if I pray for it?”

“Of course He will. This is part of His Baptismal Covenant with you. He has already, in virtue of that covenant, given you the grace sufficient to preserve you during childhood, and now He will give you the additional grace which is necessary for your additional trials in manhood; but you must seek it through the means which He has appointed for conveying it. You cannot expect Him to alter the ordinary channel which He has appointed for its conveyance, merely because you prefer some other—to make a new dispensation to suit your fancies. He sends His grace through His ordinances. You want His grace, why do you not seek it through His ordinances?”

“I thought we were to be saved through faith?” said E. “Is not this making our salvation depend upon the sacraments?”

“Of course we are saved by faith,” said the Parson, “and cannot be saved without. ‘He that believeth not shall be damned.’ But what is your idea of that word Faith? Is it believing that there is such a Person as JESUS CHRIST? or is it having confidence in what He tells you?”

“Having confidence in what He tells us, I suppose,” said E.

“Then He tells you, ‘if you eat not the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you have no life in you,’ and ‘he that eateth Me shall live by Me.’ You want to live, why do you not do that which He tells you will make you live?”

E. hesitated.

“Because,” continued the Parson, after a moment's pause, “because in your heart you do not believe Him—because you have no faith. Examine yourself upon this point; see whether under the guise of false humility you have not taken up your own rather than your SA-



viour's idea of the Sacrament, and are not drawing your conclusions from false principles. You are, I believe, heartily sorry for your past offences, and your resolutions for the future are sincere. Seal these resolutions by the grace imparted at the Sacrament, and you will probably render them permanent. Engage in these on your own strength, and they will slip from you like water. See here,"—and the Parson opened a large book that was lying on the table—"‘To eat the heavenly bread spiritually is to bring to the Altar an innocent mind. Sins, though they be daily are not deadly (distinguishing of course between sins of infirmity and habitual sins.) Before you go to the Altar, attend to the prayer you repeat, ‘Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.’ If thou forgivest thou art forgiven. Approach confidently; it is bread, not poison. None that eateth of this bread shall die.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, Tr. 26, 11.

## VI.

## SACRAMENTAL GRACE.

"You would advise me, then, not to go to Confirmation at all?" said B.

"I did not say that," said the Parson. "I would advise you to lay aside those unchristian feelings with respect to your brother, who, I admit, has sinned grievously against you. When you have done this I would advise you to go: but till you have done this I would advise you not to go."

"You think, then," said B., musing, "that such a feeling in my mind would be an obstacle to the reception of Divine grace? You imagine that when I kneel before the Bishop, and receive the imposition of his hands, I should retain only the outward sign, having lost the accompanying grace, because these feelings which you call unchristian will have placed a bar against the reception of it."

"I fear much worse than that," said the Parson gravely. "Were the danger no greater than that of merely not receiving a blessing; were there no chance of loss, no peril of damnation involved in it, I should not feel justified in advising you or any one else to stay away, for in that case the very worst that you could experience would be to gain nothing; and I should have no right to cut you off from the faintest possibility of a blessing. But I fear much worse than that. You cannot prevent the reception of Divine grace if you seek it in the ordinance which God has appointed for conveying it. Whether you receive that grace to your soul's health, or to your soul's damnation, is another question. Receive it you must; and I think, under your circumstances, it would be 'a savour of death.'"

B. looked up, startled and confused. This aspect of the case was entirely new to him, and the magnitude of his sin presented itself far more vividly to his mind when

thus placed in immediate opposition with the tremendous punishment which it involved.

"You think that there is no alternative?" said he. "You think that it must be either life or death?"

"No," said the Parson; "I will not go so far as that. That would interfere with the doctrine of repentance on the one hand, and the possibility of the falling from grace on the other. But I will say thus much, it will be either eminently to your benefit, or eminently to your loss. It is very possible that the same act may be to *your* loss and your neighbour's benefit. Suppose that, contrary to the advice of your physician, you went to Madeira for change of air, because you heard that the air of that country was salutary, and knew that it had wrought a great cure in some friend of yours. It is very possible that this might be quite true, and yet that this very air might be extremely injurious to yourself personally, because your constitution was not prepared to receive it. But, whether beneficial or injurious, breathe it you must. The act of going to the country would determine that. The act is voluntary on your part, you may go or stay; but if you go, the voluntary part ceases—breathe you must. You receive something; that something has saved your friend, that something kills you. This is the danger of going heedlessly to Confirmation.

"What do you imagine would be the effect of eating the LORD's Supper unworthily?" continued the Parson, after a pause.

"It is quite certain what it would be," said B. "S. Paul tells us that we should eat our own damnation."

"Then you must eat something more than the outward and visible sign when you eat it unworthily," said the Parson. "Bread and wine would never produce your damnation. What does produce your damnation is the inward and spiritual grace perverted by your obstinate resistance. It is your attempt, so to speak, of making CHRIST, now become one with you, a partaker in your sin, which adds so immeasurably to your guilt. Your danger lies, therefore, in receiving—there could be no danger if you received nothing."

"But you are speaking of the LORD's Supper," said B., "not of Confirmation; and though I certainly wished to be confirmed, I had no idea of receiving the Holy Communion—those very feelings which we have been talking about would have prevented me. I did not understand the danger to its full extent, no doubt, nor see it in the terrible light in which you have placed it; but I have seen quite enough of it to keep me away from the LORD's Table."

"Do you imagine, then," said the Parson, "that there is one doctrine for the LORD's Supper, and another for Confirmation, that you think you could go safely to the one with feelings which would keep you from the other?"

"They are not both alike Sacraments," said B.

"They are not both alike Sacraments of the Gospel," said the Parson. "Of Baptism our LORD has said definitely, 'except a man be born of water and of the HOLY GHOST he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Of the LORD's Supper, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.' These two, therefore, the Church pronounces authoritatively to be necessary to salvation, which is more than she dare assert of any of the other ordinances of religion, because in their case she has received no authority to do so. Still, every act of our religion has a sacramental character, that is to say, being adapted to a creature composed of body and soul, it is necessarily 'an outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace.' If you perform the outward sign visibly, you receive whatever inward grace the sign typifies and represents. Separate these two component parts and there is nothing sacramental. Were it not so, who could tell whether he did or did not belong to the kingdom of heaven; whether he was or was not one with CHRIST? Now, the kingdom of CHRIST considered as a means of grace, consists of two Sacraments, and of several ordinances either Apostolic or Ecclesiastical; these are of different degrees of value, no doubt, but all partake more or less of the sacramental character. There is, therefore, only ONE sacramental doctrine, which applies equally to them all.

By receiving any one of them unworthily, you do not lose, you pervert, whatever grace it conveys. That which conveys life to another, conveys death to you; or, that which conveys gain to another conveys loss to you. This is as true of the LORD's Prayer as it is of the LORD's Supper, and, therefore, that which you admit would be your destruction in the Holy Communion, would be your very great detriment, to say the least of it, in Confirmation."

"What must I do, then?" said B., after a long pause.

"Do!" said the Parson; "'first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' Put the matter into my hands, and I will see what can be done. I have great hopes of effecting a reconciliation, but if I fail in this, I shall treat the matter precisely as I would in the case of the Holy Communion. If he is not willing to make reparation for the errors which he has done, and you, notwithstanding, profess yourself ready to make reparation for the wrongs done on your part (for I need not tell you that when two men quarrel each does wrong to the other,) then I should admit you and exclude him. If you will not do this, I shall exclude you both; and that, observe, not as a punishment to either of you, but out of consideration for you, 'lest the things which should have been for your wealth, be unto you an occasion of falling.'"



## THE OUTWARD VISIBLE SIGN, AND THE INWARD SPIRITUAL GRACE.

THE theory of the Church is, that salvation is absolutely of free grace ; that nothing is our own ; but that God gives freely, requires us to work honestly with that which we have received freely, and then judges us according to the use to which we have put His free gifts. By this theory man's independent work is entirely precluded, and therefore, with the Church, repentance, faith, prayer, are Christian graces like any other Christian graces. They, like all others, are given freely, and when given are to be cultivated.

The Calvinistic or Evangelical theory is that regeneration of necessity comes after faith and repentance and prayer ; which implies that a certain amount of faith and repentance must be achieved by unregenerate man, which in some subsequent time is rewarded by the grace of regeneration. God's grace with them therefore practically is not free ; but is earned, as it were, by the prayer or the faith which precedes regeneration.

When the Church calls upon a man, whom she pronounces regenerate, to do works meet for repentance, she merely calls upon him to "stir up the grace that is in him," that free grace which she considers him to have received when he was baptized or regenerated.

But when the Calvinist or Evangelical preacher calls upon the very same man for the very same works, he calls upon him for human works done in his own strength, because, according to his theory, the man whom he is addressing is as yet in an unregenerate state, and, not having as yet received the grace of God, must work, if he work at all, without it.

We say, therefore, that the theory of the Church is pre-eminently salvation of free grace, as opposed to the Calvinistic or Evangelical theory, which is in fact salvation by works, for faith itself when an act of the unregenerate will and intellect and not a free gift of God, is just as much a human work as any other act of piety or charity which we perform.

It is this difference which gives the colouring to the two systems throughout.

The Churchman is taught to look *back* upon his privileges, and to live as a child of God should live. The Calvinist, unprivileged as yet, is taught to look *forward* to some indefinite period, and to live so as to attain that position at some future time. The Churchman is God's soldier, whose duty it is to guard jealously that which has been committed to his charge. The Calvinist, not as yet a child of grace and therefore without any charge to keep, hopes and prays at some future time to receive one. The one is the labourer hired and sent into the vineyard; the other the labourer standing in the market place anxious to be hired.

There is no part of the Christian theory in which this difference shows itself so evidently as in the doctrine of Sacramental grace. The Church teaches, that the LORD, having by His death wrought out for man the gift of grace which is to justify him or render him fit for salvation, gives it freely to His own, that He may give it to them at any time or in any manner, but that ordinarily He does give it through those Sacraments or Sacramental ordinances which He has appointed for the purpose of conveying it.

Of necessity, therefore, the idea of Sacramental grace does not accord with the theory of the Calvinist, and does accord with that of the Church. The Calvinist cannot imagine a free regeneration in Baptism, or a free gift of the means of spiritual life in the Holy Communion, because this idea runs counter to his whole theory, which is that of a future position which he is to gain by his own unregenerate prayer, and faith, and repentance. He therefore naturally considers Baptism and the Holy

Communion as mere signs and types, or rather as acted sermons for his instruction and encouragement, not as actual and real gifts from God.<sup>1</sup>

Hence the idea that faith on the part of the recipient is a necessary element of the Sacrament itself, rather than, what the Church considers it, a necessary medium for the beneficial use of grace so received.

The doctrine of CHRIST's Church is, that the Sacraments, to be Sacraments at all, must consist of an outward sign and an inward grace. The latter, which is the free gift, is united to the former by the word of CHRIST repeated by the Steward of God's Mysteries in the prayer of consecration, in the same manner as the parchment on which a deed is written becomes united with the intention of the deed by the act of writing upon it.

It never has been imagined that a change is produced in the *nature* of the water by the act of consecration; neither is there any change in the *nature* of the bread and wine, no further change at least than is effected in the nature of the parchment by the act of writing upon it. The change is in the *value*. The parchment, remaining parchment, becomes a deed, and

“Accedit Verbum ad elementum, et fit Sacramentum.”

The question naturally arises whether this Sacrament

<sup>1</sup> Hooker has devoted several sections in his fifth book to establish the Church theory of the Sacraments as channels of grace against this theory of the Puritans. “It greatly offendeth, he says, that some when they labour to show the use of Holy Sacraments, assign unto them no end but only to teach the mind by other senses that which the Word doth teach by hearing. Whereupon how easily neglect and careless regard of so heavenly mysteries may follow, we see in part by some experience had of those men with whom that opinion is most strong. For when the Word of GOD may be heard which teacheth with much more expedition and more full explication anything we have to learn, if all the benefit we reap by Sacraments be instruction, they which at all times have the opportunity of using the better mean to that purpose, will surely hold the worse in less estimation; and unto infants which are not capable of instruction, who would not think it a mere superfluity that any Sacrament is administered, if to administer the Sacraments be but to teach the receivers what GOD doth for them? There is of Sacraments, therefore, undoubtedly some other more excellent and heavenly use.”—Hooker, B. V. sect. 57, par. 1.

can be unmade; for if not, it would appear to follow that "the wicked and such as are void of a lively faith," do actually receive the Body and Blood of CHRIST.

Here we can go no further than the letter of Scripture will carry us. Scripture, which tells us distinctly that the union is made between the sign and the thing signified,<sup>1</sup> gives us no warrant for stating that it may be unmade; in fact says nothing about it; but, as the idea is startling, men have from time to time invented theories of their own, in order to get over this apparent difficulty. Parkyns tells us, "that the Abyssinian Christians imagine that an angel stands by unseen, and, on the approach of the wicked, removes the inward and invisible grace, leaving only the outward sign." And our own Bishop Ken, in one of his poems, entertains the same idea.

We should observe first, that this and all similar theories are but human inventions for escaping from a difficulty which in reality does not exist at all. The difficulty arises from an inconsiderate inference (for it is nothing more) which has been deduced from our LORD's revelation, (S. John vi. 51,) "I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the Bread which I will give is My Flesh," &c.

Their syllogism is—if those who eat of this bread shall live for ever; if the wicked eat of this bread, then the wicked shall inherit eternal life. This they consider, and rightly consider, as impossible, and therefore they endeavour to escape it by the theory of some subsequent division between the outward sign and inward grace. But the whole of their difficulty arises from their overlooking the 47th verse, which designates the particular class of men of whom the LORD is at that time speaking: He is speaking, and that exclusively, of the faithful. These, He says, have everlasting life. And having said this, He proceeds to reveal how it is

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 16.—"The cup of blessing which *we* bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of CHRIST?"

that everlasting life is imparted to them. If we want to see the effect of the same Sacrament on the unfaithful recipient, we must go to the 10th chapter of S. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians.

There is therefore no difficulty to be got over, no contradiction to be reconciled; the wicked partakers in the LORD's Holy Communion are not promised eternal life by our LORD, and *are* menaced with damnation by the Apostle. There is therefore no need for any human theory, and it is never safe to be wise above that which is written; we know that after consecration a union between the visible and the invisible has taken place. The LORD who has united may no doubt dissolve, therefore we will take upon us to pronounce the union indissoluble. Still, as we have no Scriptural warrant for imagining that in any case He has dissolved it, we shall take the safest course if we treat the union as if it were indissoluble, though we may not take upon us to pronounce that it is so; and it is a far more awful consideration, and one more productive of holy fear and reverence, that it is possible that the things which should have been for our wealth, may be to us an occasion of falling, and that by not discerning the LORD's Body, we eat and drink our own damnation; than that by receiving unworthily, we simply lose a benefit which under other circumstances we might have received.

Neither is there anything in the Sacramental theory of the Church which contradicts such a supposition.

It is no doubt abhorrent to the Calvinistic theory of a *reward*; for a wicked man tried and continuing in his wickedness is an unfit object for any reward whatever; but it is no more abhorrent to the Church's theory of free grace that a wicked man should receive a free gift from God, than it is that God's sun should shine, and God's rain should fall, on the just and on the unjust. His trial and his condemnation do not depend upon his receiving the gifts—these he receives as his covenanted rights,—but on the use to which he puts these gifts after he has received them. Hence he is said to eat and drink his own damnation."



This union between the outward sign and the inward grace, even if we do treat it as indissoluble, can never be confounded with either Consubstantiation or Transubstantiation. The essential difference is this, that both these imply a change of *nature* in the elements, the one by addition, the other by transmutation. This the Church of England, following the teaching of orthodox antiquity, does not recognise ; what the Church of England does recognise is a change of *value*, while the nature or substance remains the same.

According to the Sacramental theory of the Church Catholic, and therefore of the Church of England, the change which takes place in whatever element may be the outward sign of the particular Sacrament by the act of consecration, is that which takes place in a banker's bill or cheque by the act of signature.

This signature may be performed by the banker himself, or by his authorised clerk, it does not matter which ; but as soon as it is accomplished, that piece of paper, though before comparatively valueless, becomes now, without in any way changing its nature, the representative of the banker's credit to the amount which his word has willed. And, indeed, the illustration is complete throughout : the cheque thus signed becomes the instrument whereby wealth is conveyed : it is not only *intended* to convey, but it is *calculated* to convey, and *does* convey, a certain amount of benefit to the recipient, whoever he may be. The recipient, however, is quite at liberty to use the wealth so conveyed to bad purposes, and may injure himself by so doing ; but whether he use it to bad purposes or to good purposes, whether it be really injurious, or (what it was intended to be) beneficial, he has received a *bond fide* cheque,—an actual sum of money ; in no case whatever, short of formally recalling it, can this cheque ever again become the valueless piece of paper which it was before signature, except by the failure of credit in him who signed it.

This illustration holds good in every ordinance in the Church which bears a Sacramental character. With respect to the Lord's Supper in particular, it is very

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remarkable how the teaching of the Church of England conveys the idea of an indissoluble union between the inward grace and the outward sign, when we compare its practice with that of those churches which are tainted with Lutheranism. The Church of England directs that, if any of the bread and wine remain unconsecrated, the curate shall have it for his own use, because then it is merely what it was—bread and wine; but if the prayer of consecration shall have been said over it, then it may not be carried out of the church, evidently because it has now become the outward sign of the inward grace—that is to say, the Sacrament. Whereas, in the Swedish Church, whatever wine remains may be poured back into the vessels and used for ordinary purposes. This is perfectly consistent with their belief that the elements received may convey to the communicant at the moment of reception the very Body and Blood of CHRIST though no change whatever takes place in the elements themselves; but it would not be at all consistent with the Church's idea of a Sacrament—namely, that the elements have become the outward visible sign of the inward spiritual grace.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It may be said that the reason for this is, lest the consecrated elements might be used for superstitious purposes. It no doubt was a reason, but this only brings out the characteristic teaching of the English Church into stronger relief. The Swedes, the most superstitious nation on earth, had no superstition with respect to the consecrated elements, and therefore there was no need of guarding against any. Superstition is but the shadow from an unseen Light, which indicates by its presence the existence of that Light. The English might be superstitious about the vehicles of so great a mystery. There is not room for superstition in the Swedish mere bread and wine.

The Calvinistic idea of the elements is perfectly consistent with the Calvinistic theory of religion. According to the teaching of this sect, the Sacrament of the Eucharist is a mere memorial,—it conveys no grace whatever; and it would be absolutely incompatible with such a theory that the elements should possess any value. With them it is not a Sacrament in any sense of the word,—it is merely the re-acting of a certain scene for the purpose of impressing it on the mind more vividly, like the ancient sacred dramas, or “mysteries,” as they were called; its action is on the intellect and memory, not on the heart, and in no way is it the “outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace.”

The Swedish theory, that the elements convey a definite and real grace, without being consecrated to GOD or possessing any value, is not

This illustration, however, can hardly be said to describe that deep mystery, the Presence of the LORD'S Body in the elements of the Holy Communion; it is only an illustration, for we cannot but see that there is in this mystery something grander, higher, and more incomprehensible to human reason than we find in any other Sacramental ordinance whatever. It is unsafe to define what GOD has not defined; what in all probability He has not defined, because human reason was incapable of receiving it; a general illustration of the Sacramental theory will give us the idea; reverence will forbid us from prying into it too closely, while faith will supply what reason is incapable of receiving.

#### THE PRAYER BOOK.

The theory of the English Church is change of value in the elements, but not change of nature; and, in conformity with this, she never admits the possibility of a man receiving the mere outward sign; worthy or unworthy, he receives not the outward sign, but the SACRAMENT. She speaks of the reception of this Sacrament as "dangerous to those who presume to receive it unworthily;" she warns them again and again of "the dignity of that Holy Mystery, and the great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof;" she tells them that so doing will "increase their damnation,"—that it will make them guilty of the Body and Blood of CHRIST; she warns those who would approach, without repentance "not to come to that Holy Table," by holding forth to them the example of Judas.

Now, as the Church of England does not warn people in this earnest manner against coming unworthily to prayers, it is evident that she is here speaking of that which she considers of more consequence than the ordi-

Lutheran, neither is it Calvinistic, but an anomalous and incompatible compound of the two ideas; it is one of those inconsistencies into which every national church must fall, that slights its catholicity, and cuts itself off by its own will and its own act from the Church of CHRIST.

nary service, and that she regards the elements as something more than mere bread and wine, things which, in themselves, can be dangerous to nobody.

The idea of the Church of England, then, is not merely that all communicants alike receive the bread and wine, but that all, faithful or unfaithful, receive the Body and Blood of CHRIST, either to their soul's health, or to their temporal and eternal damnation.

It is precisely the same with respect to Baptism: there are not two Baptisms for the remission of sins, but one. The most unworthy recipient of adult Baptism has received not only the outward sign of the water, but the inward grace which that water typifies and conveys. He has received it to his own infinite loss, it may be, but he has received it. This is perfectly evident, for were he to repent at some subsequent period of his life, he would not be baptized afresh, as he must be if his first Baptism were imperfect; that original Baptism, unworthy as he was of it then, would still be valid, and, on the supposition of his sincere repentance, would become the efficacious instrument of his salvation.

The very same may be said of Confirmation: no one is confirmed anew upon pleading want of faith at the time of originally receiving it; if he has received it unfaithfully, the things which should have been to his wealth are to him an occasion of falling; but when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, that very same grace may become efficacious, and he may save his soul alive. Thus all, good and bad, faithful and unfaithful, when they receive the outward sign, receive at the same time the Sacrament, or sacramental ordinance, which the outward sign represents; and we have no reason for supposing that the Sacrament of the Holy Communion is any exception to this general law.

This will become more evident, if we compare this doctrine of the Prayer Book with the same doctrine as set forth by the Bible.

The doctrine in question will be found in the tenth chapter of S. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians.

## THE BIBLE.

It may be laid down as a general rule of typical interpretation, that there is nothing in the type which has not its counterpart and correspondence in the antitype.

In all cases, where an argument is drawn from the type to the antitype, the necessity of bearing this rule strictly and closely in mind, will easily appear.

To apply these remarks to the elucidation of the doctrine of the Sacraments.

In 1 Cor. x., S. Paul is arguing against the notion, that *because* Christians had been baptized, and had been admitted to Holy Communion, *therefore* they might safely join in the idol-feasts.

For the purpose of this argument, he states :

1. The two types of Holy Baptism, the cloud and the Sea.

2. The type of Holy Communion, the Manna<sup>1</sup> and the Rock.

Of the types of Holy Baptism, he says :—"I would not that ye should be ignorant, brethren, how that *all* our fathers were under the cloud, and *all* passed through the sea, and were all baptized<sup>2</sup> unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

Of the types of the Holy Communion, he says :—"And did *all* eat the same *spiritual* meat, and did *all* drink the same *spiritual* drink, for they drank of that *spiritual* rock that followed them. And that rock was *Christ*."

He then adds—"But with many of them<sup>3</sup> God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." "Now these things were our examples."<sup>4</sup>

And again, v. 11. "Now all these things happened unto them for examples."<sup>5</sup>

Observe how careful S. Paul has been to say "*all*"<sup>6</sup> and "*the same*." He repeats "*all*" five times in the laying down the types, and once again, v. 17, where he

<sup>1</sup> Compare S. John vi. 31—63; iv. 10—14.

<sup>2</sup> ἐβαπτίσαντο.

<sup>3</sup> Τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν.

<sup>4</sup> Ταῦτα δὲ Τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν.

<sup>5</sup> Ταῦτα δὲ πάντα Τύποι συνέβαινον ἐκείνοις.

<sup>6</sup> πάντες Τὸ αὐτό.



is speaking of the antitype. "For we are *all* partakers of *that one* bread."

In like manner he repeats "*the same*" twice in speaking of the type and its counterpart, "*that one*"<sup>1</sup> in speaking of the antitype.

Observe further that the *whole point and force* of S. Paul's argument turns upon the use of these words, "*all*" and "*the same*."

*All* our forefathers were partakers of *the same* types of the Holy Sacraments. But, nevertheless, many of these perished miserably in the wilderness, *i.e.*, the fact of their *universal* and *common* participation did not avail to save them.

You have all been admitted to partake of the same antitypes. Beware lest this your universal and common participation upon which you are relying, have a like miserable issue.

The argument is relevant and cogent throughout.

But where is its relevancy or cogency, or consistency with the above rule of typical interpretation, and the application of it to an *argument*, if S. Paul is made to teach in this place of Holy Scripture, that *all* our forefathers were partakers of *the same* types, but that *some only* of the baptized and communicants are partakers of the antitypes, and that the rest are either not partakers of them *at all*, or *in a different way*?

S. Paul has indeed guarded carefully against any such misrepresentation of his teaching, by the use of the words "*all*" and "*that one*" in v. 17, foreseeing, it would appear, in what manner the doctrine of the Sacraments would be perverted or misapprehended.

It is impossible to expound clearly this place of Holy Scripture, or to apprehend what S. Paul's argument in this place is, except we admit, that the thing *given and received* in and by the outward and visible sign in Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion is, in *all* cases, *identically one and the same thing*.

As in the types, so in the antitypes.

<sup>1</sup> ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς "*the one*."

What is the *efficacy* of the thing so given and received is *another question*.

That *efficacy* may be "unto life," as in the case of those who receive "worthily;" or it may be "unto death," as in the case of those who receive "unworthily."

It is competent to suppose a case in which an adult, having been a grievous sinner, presents himself to be baptized without any faith or repentance, with hypocrisy, mockery, and blasphemy in his heart,—a case in which the profanation of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism is the one thing that remains to fill up the measure of iniquity.

It is competent also to suppose a case of an adult baptized in infancy, and yet so living, and so coming to Holy Communion, as to "purchase to himself damnation." Article xxv.

In both these cases the outward and visible sign has passed, conveying God's gift.

But it has been *finally* "unto death." And, short of such extreme cases of receiving "unworthily," and *therein* of *final* condemnation, there will be cases of receiving "unworthily" in different degrees; in all of which the receiving is "unto death."<sup>1</sup>

Again, of those who receive "worthily," *i.e.*, with repentance and faith, there must be an infinite number of degrees, from the lowest degree of repentance and faith, to the highest.

The *efficacy* of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, in the case of adults, and of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, in the case of all receiving, *i.e.*, the *comfort* and *edification* imparted therein and thereby, must be relative and proportional in each case.

But *the thing given and received is identically the same in all*. If it be not received *at all* in the case of those who receive "unworthily," then in their case there is *no Sacrament*. If it be a *different thing* that is received by them, from that which is received by those who receive

<sup>1</sup> Compare 1 Cor. xi. 30.

“worthily,” then in their case there is *a different Sacrament, i.e.*, the doctrine is taught of *two kinds* of Sacraments, and not *one*; *two* Holy Baptisms, *two* Holy Communions.

It is obvious to remark, upon this passage of Holy Scripture, how clearly it instances the *oneness* of the doctrine of the Sacraments. S. Paul lays down in the outset the types of *both* Sacraments, but he *argues* from these types to the right receiving of the Holy Communion *only*.

## EXAMINATION PAPERS.

THERE are few methods of preparing catechumens for Confirmation more generally useful, not to the catechumens only, but to the parish at large, than the weekly distribution of examination papers, and the weekly correction of them by the Parson.

On the Sunday evening, immediately after an explanatory sermon, each catechumen should be furnished with a paper of questions, the answers to which he is expected to submit to the Parson's inspection in the course of the ensuing week. Those which I subjoin are published by Parker, and form the 29th number of his Parochial Tracts. This is the second series, the first is somewhat less difficult, but in all other respects similar.

It may seem at first sight that both these series are too difficult for the purpose, and no doubt there will always be many whom they will not suit; for these the Parson may make out a simpler form, but, for a parish properly prepared, the forms given will not be found by any means too difficult, because they refer to matters treated of in the sermons and lectures of the preceding Sunday; neither must we compare them with school or college examination papers, which are given to test the learning or ability of each individual, and which therefore must be answered by the individual himself; the object of these papers is to diffuse accurate ideas on matters of religion as widely as possible throughout the parish, and to induce search into matters not thought of before, rather than to prove previous search and study. When these papers are delivered, each catechumen should be made to understand that he is at full liberty to get assistance in answering them wherever he can

find it,—that the Parson's library is open to him at certain times,—that the Parson himself is ready to answer or explain anything, or to give any references, or to procure any tracts which may be supposed to throw light upon the subject. Instead of being forbidden to ask his friends, he should be encouraged to do so, because it is just as much the Parson's aim, that the catechumen's friends should profit by these papers, as that the catechumen himself should profit by them. If the questions were such as the catechumens could answer readily, and without any farther study than that which they have already gone through, the papers would be nearly useless: they are intended, in the first place, as the guides to religious reading, and, in the second, each catechumen is supposed to keep them as remembrancers for future years.

It will be observed that in the tract as sold by Parker, such subject, except the last, is complete in a single leaf. It is strongly recommended that the Parson do not give out the whole tract at once, because it is found in practice that it is impossible in that case to confine the catechumens to one subject,—that they will read through the whole as a book, and acquire only a confused idea of it; so also will those whom they consult; whereas, if they have but one subject given them at a time, they will turn their whole attention to that one subject, and probably will acquire a very fair idea of it before they are required to enter upon another. The Parson, therefore, should cut the thread that sews the tract together, and give out the separated leaves singly.

## I.—HOLY BAPTISM.

1. What is the state and condition of every child of man born into the world?

Whence has this its origin?

Does *original* or *birth sin* consist in sinning like Adam?

If not, define in what it does consist. (See Ninth Article.)



2. What means has God appointed in the Church to remedy this?

Is "birth-sin" so entirely done away, that no tendency to evil remains?

3. Give the *literal* and the *sacramental* meaning of the word "Baptism."

When, and by whom, and in what words, was this Sacrament ordained?

Had any previous intimation of its necessity been given? To whom? S. John iii.

4. Was our blessed LORD baptized?

By whom?

Can you give any reason for this? S. Matt. iii. (First Prayer in the Order of Public Baptism of Infants.)

In what did the Baptism of John and the Baptism in the name of the LORD JESUS differ? Acts xix.

5. Were there any converts to the Christian Faith in the days of the Apostles who were not baptized?

What do you infer from this?

Mention some remarkable converts who were by Baptism made members of CHRIST.

6. It is said in the Catechism that Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are "generally" necessary to salvation: what do you understand by the word *generally*?

Illustrate your answer by a reference to any other part of the Book of Common Prayer. (See the Office for the Baptism of Adults.)

Show that the account of S. Paul's conversion (Acts ix., xxii.) is a testimony to the statement of Hooker (book v. sect. lvii. 5), "It is not ordinarily God's will to bestow the grace of Sacraments on any, but by the Sacraments."

7. What ordinance of the Jewish Church corresponded with the Sacrament of Baptism?

At what age was this administered?

8. Have we any command, direct or implied, to bring our infants to be baptized?

What does the Church say on this subject? (See Twenty-seventh Article; first Rubric to the Office of Private Baptism.)

9. What *matter* and what *words* are essential to make Baptism valid?

Why does the Church order the sign of the cross to be made on the infant's forehead? (See Office for the Public Baptism of Infants.)

10. What are the benefits which the baptized receive in this Sacrament?

In what relation do they stand to God?

Quote Holy Scripture in proof of your answer. Rom. viii. 15.

## II.—BAPTISMAL VOWS.

1. Explain fully, "My godfathers and godmothers in my Baptism did promise and vow three things *in my name*."

How far are you bound by their promise?

If you fail in your engagement, what will be the result?

Give Scriptural proofs.

2. What is the first thing required of persons to be baptized?

Explain what three things in particular you have vowed to renounce.

Give proofs from Holy Scripture that the Christian is able by Divine Grace to overcome Satan.

Also quote from the Old and New Testament any text which may show how the world and its pomps and vanity are to be regarded. Eccles., 1 S. John, Coloss.

What are the lusts or works of the flesh? Gal. v.

Is it permitted to the young to indulge in these? Epistle to Timothy.

Enumerate those graces which the baptized are to strive to exhibit in their life and conversation.

3. What brief summary have we of the chief Articles of our Faith?

What does the Church say concerning Creeds? (See Article of Religion.)

Why is the Creed contained in the Form of Daily Prayer and in the Catechism called the Apostles' Creed?

4. What title is given to that Creed which we use in the office for Holy Communion?

Why was it so called?

Can you give any historical account of it?

Who was the great champion of the Faith by whose name the third Creed is called?

Did he compose it?

5. Mention any occasions on which the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are related in Holy Scripture to have been present.

Give Scriptural proofs that "the FATHER is GOD," "the SON is GOD," "the HOLY GHOST is GOD," "and yet they are not Three GODS, but One GOD."

6. Give in three words the three things promised and vowed by you through your sponsors in your Baptism.

What is the third at length?

7. Where do you find the duty of a Christian set forth?

What two precepts of our Blessed LORD comprehend the whole of these?

By what word are the Ten Commandments designated?

On what were these originally written?

Which commandments contain your duty towards God?

What are these called?

Which your duty towards your neighbour?

What are they styled?

Who is your neighbour?

8. Explain each Commandment by the summary which the Catechism contains of your duty to God and to your neighbour.

Show that outward obedience is of no avail, unless the heart be right with GOD. 2 Cor. x., and any other passages you may recollect.

### III.—PRAYER.

1.—Are you able, in your own strength, to do all that you have promised by your sponsors?

Of what then have you especial need?

How is this to be sought for?

2. Quote passages from Holy Scripture to prove the necessity of a Mediator or Intercessor between God and man.

Is there more than one Mediator?

3. Show the necessity of *private* and *public* prayer, by texts from the Old and New Testament.

Was our Blessed LORD careful to use private prayer, and to be present at the services of the Temple and the synagogues?

What inference do you draw from this?

4. What grounds have we for supposing that God accepts man's offering of Houses set apart and consecrated to His service?

Are any blessings specially promised to them who meet together for Common Prayer in such Holy Places?

5. State any arguments you can in favour of a pre-composed Liturgy, and against extempore prayers.

Why is the Prayer Book of the Church of England called the "Book of Common Prayer?"

6. Give a short paraphrase or explanation of the LORD's Prayer.

#### IV.—CONFIRMATION.

1. What is the original and literal meaning of the word "Sacrament?"

What do you mean by the word in its highest sense, as used in the Catechism?

How many Sacraments has CHRIST ordained in His Church?

Show the three points you regard to be requisite to constitute a Sacrament.

2. Is the HOLY SPIRIT given to us in all His fulness at Baptism?

Have we any grounds for supposing that He will at any subsequent period come unto us?

What rite is ordered for the conveyance of the Divine Gift?

Define the ordinance and the graces bestowed upon a meet recipient.

By what other significant names is it known?

3. Had the Jewish Church any rite which at all bore a resemblance to this?

What reasons have you to suppose that our Blessed LORD observed it? S. Luke ii.

4. Is Confirmation a Divine ordinance?

On what grounds do you make this answer?

Prove that it was regarded by the Apostles as essential, and consequently generally practised. Acts viii.; xix.

In what rank does S. Paul place it? Heb. vi.

What order of clergy can alone administer it?

5. What does the Church of England, either in Rubrics or any other part of the Prayer Book, say of Confirmation?

Are you therefore bound to observe this holy ordinance?

Do you thereby incur any obligation which you have not already incurred by your Baptism?

6. What is required of those who come to be confirmed?

What benefits are you seeking in partaking of this holy rite?

Do you desire and intend, immediately, and regularly after your Confirmation, to be a partaker of the Sacrament of the LORD's Supper?

7. Is any symbolic action used in administering Confirmation?

Of what is it emblematic?

## V.—THE HOLY COMMUNION.

1. When was the Sacrament of the LORD's Supper ordained?

Had our Blessed LORD given any previous intimation that this, like Holy Baptism, was necessary to salvation? S. John vi.

In Baptism, life was given; in Confirmation, strength



and illumination : what blessing is attached to a faithful partaking of the LORD's Supper?

2. Quote S. Paul's account of the Institution. 1 Cor.

Was he an eye-witness? or whence did he obtain the knowledge?

By what other names is this Sacrament known?

3. How many parts are there in a Sacrament?

What is the outward part, or sign, in the LORD's Supper?

What the inward part, or thing signified?

Quote S. Paul to confirm your statement.

By what mean is the inward part received? Art. xxviii.

What do "the wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith," take therein? Art. xxix.

What are the benefits of which the faithful are partakers thereby?

What injuries do the wicked bring on themselves by their irreverent partaking?

4. Is there any symbolic action in the administration of this Sacrament?

What does this represent?

In what do we, by celebrating the Holy Eucharist, plead an interest?

5. Was the sacrifice of CHRIST necessary to man's redemption?

Prove this by quotation from Holy Scripture.

Do you know of any types that God had fore-ordained of this sacrifice?

Quote any prophecies you may remember concerning the Crucifixion, with their fulfilment.

6. Explain how CHRIST was "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. xiii. 8.

What blessings did CHRIST procure for us by His Resurrection and Ascension?

7. Mention in four words "what is required of them who come to the LORD's Supper."

Can you neglect or turn away from this Holy Sacrament without committing a sin against God's law, and endangering the welfare of your soul? S. John vi.

How often ought you to receive it?

## VI.—THE CHURCH.

1. What do you profess in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds to believe concerning the Church?

Explain the various meanings which are attached to the word "Church."

What is the meaning designed in the Creeds?

Illustrate your answer by a reference to the Articles of Religion, and any other part of the Book of Common Prayer you may call to mind.

2. How is the Church "*Holy*?" 1 S. Pet. i.; 2 Tim. i.; Eph. iv.; 1 Cor. iii.

What do you mean by the word *Catholic*? and how does this apply to the Church? S. Matt. xxviii.; S. Mark xvi.; Eph. iv.

Can any one branch of the Church claim the title of Catholic to the exclusion of the rest?

How is the Church *Apostolic*? Eph. ii.; Acts ii.

How is the Church *One*? Eph. iv.; S. John x.; 1 Cor. x.; Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xii.

3. Of whom is the Church composed?

By what title does our Blessed LORD call His Church in many of His Parables?

Give Scriptural proofs that on earth the good and bad will be mingled together in this Society.

By what four marks are the true members distinguished? Acts ii.

4. When the Apostles planted churches in Samaria, Antioch, and other places, were these considered separate bodies, or merely branches of the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church?

5. What order of Clergy are necessary to the existence and government of the Church?

Did the Apostles receive any authority to hand down their office to others, who in like manner were again to transmit it? S. Matt. xxvii. 20.

Name any Bishops mentioned in the New Testament as consecrated by the Apostles.

Quote any text in which *directions* are given to these Bishops to ordain.

By what other titles were Bishops denominated?  
Rev. i. ii. iii.

6. What other orders of Clergy are in the Church?

By what titles is the second order distinguished in the New Testament?

Have these always existed since the Apostles' time?

Give an account of the first ordination of Deacons.

7. On what ground does the Church of England claim to be a branch of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church?

Have we any reason to suppose that a branch was planted in Britain before the mission of S. Augustine, A.D. 597?

8. In what century did the Pope begin to usurp dominion over the Anglican Church?

In what reign did the English set about throwing off this usurped dominion?

Is the Church of England, as she now exists, a New Church?

Upon what principle did the Reformers act?

9. In what light does Holy Scripture represent "Schism?"

How does the Church of England regard it?

What language does she put into her children's mouths to pray for unity?

10. "The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith."

"The Church is a witness and keeper of Holy Writ."  
Art. xx.

Explain these assertions, and prove them fully from Holy Scripture.

Enumerate the privileges enjoyed in the Church.

## SYNOPSIS OF SERMONS.

At one time I used frequently to teach by requiring from my catechumens a synopsis of my sermon. I got the idea at Lavington. To make notes of the afternoon sermons was a regular Sunday evening exercise in Archdeacon Manning's schools. These notes were delivered to the schoolmaster on the Monday morning, and those which he considered deserving the distinction were kept for the Archdeacon's own reading. I introduced the practice into Westbourne, and extended it to the pupil-teachers and to the catechumens preparing for Confirmation. Several very good, sound, sensible essays have been from time to time sent to me, sometimes from the unaided pens of the catechumens, sometimes with more or less assistance from their friends; for, as my object was to teach, not only the catechumens, but the whole parish, I gave it to be understood that I permitted any amount of assistance from their friends or relations.

Much good may reasonably be expected from this mode of teaching. It is calculated to fix the mind, to prevent the thoughts from wandering during the sermon, and to give a habit, not only of attention, but of reflection also. Still, I have reason to doubt whether all this good is not mixed with a considerable portion of evil. I am quite sure that the use of this method requires little sound judgment in the Parson, and that it cannot be safely practised on all subjects, or recommended to all people indiscriminately. I was convinced of this by its effect on myself. Some time after I had adopted this practice, there was a great congregation in the nave of Chichester Cathedral for some general purpose, and I

went, intending to write a report of it, together with a synopsis of the sermon, for one of the Church papers,—in fact, to do myself precisely what I was in the habit of requiring from others. I wrote a very satisfactory article, no doubt, and very likely gave the public a good idea of the Bishop's sermon; but the effect on my own mind was anything but satisfactory. Instead of turning my attention to the subject generally, and as a whole, the service, the lessons, and the general effect of the sermon, I found I had been watching for the "points," for remarkable passages which I could recollect, or which would be effective; and, as I went home, that which was turning in my mind was, not the subject, but the arrangement, the mechanical part of it.

From that time forward I determined, not indeed to abandon the use of this exercise, but to limit it very materially. My idea is, that, as a general mode of teaching, to be used indiscriminately, like catechising or examination papers, it is injurious, or may be injurious, but that it may be used with effect occasionally; that the class of sermons best calculated for it is that the character of which is explanatory; it is best of all calculated for an argumentative treatise, but no sermons *ad populum* ought to be argumentative at all. According to my judgment, all those sermons which are of a hortatory character are utterly unfit for it. For instance, I should not again recommend, or even permit, such a synopsis to be made as my present specimen from the Bishop's Confirmation charge,—not that the synopsis does not give a very good idea of the charge itself, but that I believe the writer of it would be more likely to profit by the very excellent advice it contains, had she been listening to it simply as advice given, rather than as materials for an essay which she was to prepare for me.

It will, however, serve very well for a specimen, and it is the only one I happen to have by me. The writer was then a pupil-teacher at Westbourne School, and is now employed in the school at ———. I am sure it was written by herself, because none of her friends can read or write.



At the time I am speaking of I had not come to the decision which I have now, respecting the character of sermons fitted for this exercise, and as I was anxious to possess a record of the Bishop's exhortation, which was, as I had heard from others, unusually good and impressive,—as indeed it proved to be when I heard it myself at Westbourne,—I called upon five or six of the catechumens to make me, each of them, a synopsis of it, and this I preserved because it was the best. I need hardly add that the Bishop is in no way responsible for anything this essay contains; it is not even a report of it,—it is merely what happened to strike the mind of an auditor.

The original address was delivered extempore, or at all events without book or notes; it was not delivered, as is usual, from the pulpit, but the Bishop advanced from his seat at the altar to the middle of the nave, and, standing on the floor of it, surrounded by the assembled catechumens and their friends, addressed his remarks to one or other division of them, young men or young women, or older and more neglected catechumens who had hitherto slighted the ordinance, or sponsors and parents, of whom there were a great many collected, as the various subjects on which he touched seemed to require.

I have heard a good many charges of one sort or other, but I never heard one that, with so little attempt at oratory, produced so great an effect as the last Confirmation charge delivered by the Bishop of Chichester in the nave of Westbourne Church, and the reason of this I suspect was its simplicity, its earnestness, and its evident truthfulness. The Bishop felt what he said, and looked as if he felt it.

I cannot say whether it was the idea of the moment, or whether the Bishop had studied the æsthetic effect, but if he had studied it for half his life, he could not have found a more effective mode of addressing the catechumens than that which he adopted. When he left his seat at the altar, and, bidding us not to follow him, stood alone among the people, it was as if the First Priest of the Diocese, divesting himself for the time of his priestly character, and standing among the young of the flock,

as an old man and a father, was advising them *from his own experience* on their entrance upon that journey of life, a great portion of which he had himself passed through,—I am sure, from subsequent observations, made to me by my own people, that this was the idea uppermost in their minds.

The effect of the Bishop's charge will best be seen by the essay itself. I used always to consider the goodness or badness of these essays a much better criterion of my own sermon and my own preaching, than it was of the attention or inattention of the writers. I used to study these things as critiques upon myself, and I do not hesitate to say that I very materially improved the style of my preaching and the character of my sermons by so doing. I learnt from it to preach intelligibly. Now I never had so many good essays as I had on this occasion, and I regret that this is the only one I have been able to recover.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE BISHOP OF CHICHESTER'S ADVICE.

Confirmation is a holy rite which was ordained by the Apostles, and sanctioned by the Holy Apostolic Church. We read in the Holy Gospel of S. Luke about the blessed Redeemer laying His hands on the disciples whom He had Himself chosen, and blessing them, but we do not gather any information from that about the holy rite of Confirmation. In the Acts of the Apostles we read of

<sup>1</sup> Anne Voller, the author of this little treatise, which I retain in my second edition, rather in remembrance of a favourite pupil, than because it does justice either to the subject or to the writer, was the daughter of a shepherd in the parish. She had lost her mother early, and this rather drew my attention to her. When she wrote this she was between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and had just been apprenticed to the school. She became one of my most promising pupils, and when after three years I transferred her to Trowbridge, gained as high a place in the esteem of her employers there as she had obtained in mine.

Having passed through her examination with credit at the age of nineteen, she received her appointment as mistress of Codford school, and four months afterwards was brought home to Westbourne in a dying state from the effects of over exertion and a neglected cold. She lies in Westbourne churchyard,—the first fruits, I trust, of my little party in the harvest of God.

Philip the Deacon converting the people of Samaria, but it was not he who confirmed them, he had not that power, it was the chosen Apostles of the SAVIOUR, Peter and John. We therefore conclude from this, that it is not every one who can confirm, but it must be a person chosen by God, a person of a certain rank or position in the Church. It is a Bishop who holds this high position, it is no one of an inferior rank who can perform this office.

Through this holy rite we are enabled to reach the holy table of the Body and Blood of CHRIST. There are many people who approach that table without first going under the holy rite of Confirmation. No one ought to do so, for we must be strengthened by the LORD Himself before we go to the Sacrament of His Supper. Confirmation is a Sacrament of no mean character, though the Church does not place it among the two Sacraments (Baptism and the LORD's Supper) which are necessary to every man for his own salvation. Where there is no Bishop to confirm, it cannot be done, no one else *can* do it.

In Confirmation we renew those promises which our godfathers and godmothers promised for us in our baptism. We are now old enough to take the vows upon ourselves. In the end of the service for the public baptism of infants, there is an address which the Priest reads to the godfathers and godmothers, exhorting them to bring the charge, which has just been committed to their care, to the Bishop, as soon as he or she can say the Creed, the LORD's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism, set forth for that purpose. The Church does not say that the child should be brought to the Bishop before it can say the Catechism, but as *soon* as he can say it. All godfathers and godmothers ought, and are the *proper* persons to bring the child who is going to be confirmed to the Bishop. They ought there, in the church, to deliver up their charges in a proper and respectful manner to God. But very few sponsors there are who give themselves this trouble. They think very little about the soul which has been entrusted to their care.

The next thing to be considered is how a newly-confirmed Christian should spend the remainder of the day on which he has been confirmed; it should not be spent in frivolous amusements or in merry making, but it should be spent in prayer to that allwise Creator, in order to secure that Spirit which has just been given to him through the holy rite of Confirmation. He should think seriously of what he has undertaken, he is now responsible to God for *his own soul*, those sponsors which promised for him (or in his name at baptism) have given him up entirely now. They have no more to do with him after Confirmation. All these things should a newly-confirmed Christian think over, and lay seriously to heart during the remaining part of the day after he has been confirmed. But many there are who go away and do not think any more at all about the vows which they have just renewed. They think that Confirmation is nothing more than merely a form, the outward and visible sign of which is the Bishop's laying his hand on their head. They do not think about the inward and invisible grace which is showered into their souls. They do not think they get anything by it, whereas they get the help of that Spirit which was so graciously given them in baptism, besides being admitted to the holy table of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which ought to be considered as a great favour and an especial blessing. Therefore, as I before said, it should be spent in earnest and sincere supplication to God, in order that they keep those baptismal vows which they have just renewed and taken upon themselves.

The next thing to be considered by a newly-confirmed person, is what sort of companions we should make choice of. We should not choose them for their personal accomplishments or endowments, but according to their virtues, we should ask ourselves whether they are the right persons, and likely to lead us nearer to heaven, or whether they will carry us a step nearer eternal misery. Good companions may and *will* lead us into the right way to heaven, for many people will hearken to the kind warnings of a friend, even when they will not listen to



any one else. A good companion will lead a person nearer heaven, while a *bad* companion leads them much nearer hell. Whatever may be a bad companion's personal endowments, we should not notice them, but we should look on their inward vices before we choose them. If a good person happens to choose bad companions, he will gradually lose all those virtues which he once was possessed of, he will degrade himself through those wicked friends, but he will not be able to resist their bad temptations.

It is an easy matter to fall from the right path, but it is difficult to get into the right road when once strayed. Wicked companions will lead a person into all sorts of vices, dishonesty, drunkenness, murder, and all such like things. How careful should we then be in the choice of friends. Friendship is sweet, but it is also deceitful. Many there be who will at first pretend to be what they may call good, and yet be infinitely wicked. They will be ashamed for you to see any of their evil and dark deeds at first, but these will gradually appear, and come out, one by one, until they are *all*, every *one*, discovered. How careful should we then be in the choice of friends: we should think seriously before we choose them. Many good people have been led from the right way, by the false flattery of a friend, and many bad persons have also been brought to see and acknowledge their faults through the kind instructions and warnings of a friend.

Next will be considered the holy rite of matrimony. This ceremony unites man and woman for the rest of life. They are joined together by the Minister, never more to be separated by any one. In this rite many things must be remembered. The husband is bound to love and cherish his wife till death shall sever that bond, and the wife promises to obey her husband. S. Paul says the husband should give honour unto the wife as unto the weaker sex. This holy rite was instituted by God for the happiness of man. Even our SAVIOUR Himself honoured a marriage feast with His own natural appearance. Nevertheless let it alway be consi-



dered and remembered that the husband is the *head* of the wife, he is the sole head of the family. His body, strength, and frame give him that title. Let them always consider that they are joined by nothing save the appointed way of God. Let them always think of the promises they made when they were united, and never violate them. Else will they be called to an account for it at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed.

The next thing to be borne in mind is the duties of fathers to their children. We say *fathers*, because mothers in general do their parts towards the child. The father does not seem to take an interest in the education of his own child: all this work generally devolves on the mother. Still it is the father's duty as well as the mother's, to see that his children are properly and well instructed. You may often see a tender mother imparting her knowledge to her youthful children, while the father takes very little notice whether the child learns anything or not. He does not seem to care, provided he has nothing to do with it. The children's souls will be required at his hands, and what will be his answer when he will have to appear before that great and terrible God, if he neglects that *duty to his children*?

Lastly, we will consider the invitation to the Lord's table. As soon as any one is confirmed, he should avail himself of the first opportunity to attend to that Divine calling. If we let it alone once we shall twice, and so on till we do not go at *all*. Should we not then attend to the heavenly invitation of the Redeemer, Who says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." It is one of the two Sacraments which are generally necessary for the salvation of every sinner. God Himself invites us to the feast, let us not refuse. But if we go without self-examination, without searching our hearts and repenting of our sins, we had much better stay away, we only incur damnation to ourselves. If we go to that holy table in faith, believing that we shall be strengthened

by the holy elements, it will be the means of supporting us through *this world* of *sin*, if we go often enough, and always with such faith. Let no one ever delay when he is invited to that holy table, lest if he *do* delay it once or twice, he will never go, and so make himself unworthy of the redemption of the blessed SAVIOUR.

A. V.

### THE ESSAY.

Whatever may be said of the Synopsis of Sermons as a profitable exercise, there can be no doubt whatever about the Essay; the benefit derived from this has no drawback of any kind. The intention of it, of course, is to direct the mind of the catechumen to any point of peculiar importance, or still more to any particular parallelism or train of cause and effect, which may be suited to his own disposition or the bent of his own thoughts. There is no exercise which will give the Parson so good an insight into the mind of his catechumen as this, nor are any observations of his likely to be of more use than his criticisms on the various passages of the composition before him.

This exercise, however, will never be one of very general utility, for on trial the Parson will be surprised to find how very few there are, even among those considered well educated, who can express their thoughts in an essay. Many there will always be to master his examination papers, however difficult he makes them, provided they consist of direct questions requiring direct answers; but to connect these answers into a train of reasoning, or even a lengthened narrative, requires practice, and can be learned in no other way.

Children are trained in national schools to write essays, and should be in every school. The first step is simple narrative. The lives of patriarchs and apostles, or descriptions of animals and vegetables, or facts of history, written on their slates. This naturally leads, in the higher classes, to the causes and results of the

facts related, which, as the mind becomes strengthened and capable of reasoning, expands into the essay.

The annexed specimen is the composition of a catechumen trained under this system at Westbourne National School.

*Subjects of Essays adapted for Confirmation.*

I.

Explain S. Peter's character from the instances in S. Matt. xiv. and S. Matt. xxvi.; willing but failing when put to trial. Compare this with the instances recorded in Acts iii. State how long an interval of time elapsed between S. Matt. xxvi. and Acts iii., and what remarkable events happened during that interval. Account for the change in S. Peter's conduct, and show in what that change consisted.

II.

Explain the parable of the talents, by comparing it first with Exod. xvi. 18, and then with 1 Cor. xii.

III.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Explain the force of the word "then," by comparing this passage with the preceding chapter. Considering CHRIST, in His human character, as our example, reconcile by means of this what S. Paul says (Rom. vii.) about his natural corruption, forcing him into sin against his will, with what he says (1 Cor. x.) about God not suffering us to be tempted above that we are able.

IV.

Compare the fifth chapter of S. John, where CHRIST, having strengthened the paralytic man, warns him to sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon him, with the description given by S. Matthew, (xii. 43,) where the devil who has been cast out, finding on his return his

abode swept and garnished, takes to him seven other spirits worse than himself. Apply this warning to the case of a Christian just confirmed.

SPECIMEN OF ESSAY ON THE LAST SUBJECT BY A  
CATECHUMEN.

The pool of Bethesda, the place where CHRIST performed this miracle, is in the first instance a type of baptism. It was the place where God had vouchsafed to heal persons afflicted with any disease, should they wash in those waters after they were touched by a heavenly messenger, while at baptism a person may be cleansed from his sins by being washed in the waters after they are sanctified by God's heavenly messengers, the priests; but the same miracle will do equally well in typifying any vehicle through which God pleases to send His grace, and therefore may be applied to Confirmation.

The man on whom CHRIST performed His miracle had been paralysed thirty-eight years, and it appears to have been as a punishment for some sin, that the sickness was sent upon him then. CHRIST, most likely to try the patience of one who had been so long sick, inquires of him if he will be made whole, and then heals him.

No person is obliged to enter the Christian covenant; CHRIST's Church is open to all, and all are welcome; and when the Christian is admitted, CHRIST gives His free grace, not for any deservings on his part, that would be rewarding him; He gives it to him gratuitously.

But, because it is given freely, it by no means signifies that we are required to do nothing with it *after* it is given; we are expected to work with it, and if we neglect this, we are punished for neglecting it. After the paralytic man had been healed, CHRIST, although He met him in the temple, (a very proper place for him who had been sick,) did not fail to remind him that should he sin again, a worse thing would come upon him.

Our SAVIOUR had before explained this in His parable of the unclean spirit, who, after he had been once cast out, and a second time found a ready reception for him, the last state of the man in whom he had entered, was worse than the first. This is also, in its first sense, a type of baptism, but might also be applied to other graces. The devil is cast out by the free grace of God, and the man is enabled to work with the grace given him. Before this time his sins were sins of infirmity; but now, if his heart is again become wicked, is again swept and garnished for the devil, his sin is seven times worse than it was before, because he has despised the strengthening grace of God, and has sinned now, having the power to do better. He has done just what our SAVIOUR warned the paralytic not to do,—sinned *again*, and a worse thing *is* come upon him.

This is the case with the free grace God gives at Confirmation. Before a person has been confirmed, and before he has received this grace, he might, as an excuse for doing wrong, plead that he has not strength to do better,—that he has not had power to resist the various temptations to which he was exposed; but after he has been confirmed, after he has received the grace of God, and *then* does wrong, his case is like that of the man in whom the unclean spirit was, and the paralytic man, if he sinned again, many times worse than it was before. We know that the grace which God gives at Confirmation is sufficient to strengthen us to resist the devil, and to do all which God requires; for our SAVIOUR says, in so many words, “My grace is sufficient for thee,” and S. Paul himself confirms this, by saying, “I can do all things through CHRIST, which strengtheneth me.”

A. P.

### *Observations.*

I. *Parson.* Sanctified by God’s heavenly messengers, the Priests, is not quite correct. To whom, in the case of the miracle in question, do you compare the Priests?  
*Answer.* To the Angel that troubled the waters.



*Parson.* Did the Angel himself sanctify the water?

*Answer.* The HOLY GHOST, by means of the Angel.

*Parson.* Then you should have said, "The HOLY GHOST, by the instrumentality of God's messenger, the Priest." Have we any instance in the Bible of God's Priests being called Angels?

*Answer.* The heads of the seven Churches, in the book of the Revelation, are called Angels by our SAVIOUR Himself.

II. *Parson.* You say "our SAVIOUR had before explained." Why do you imagine that our SAVIOUR had explained it *before*?

*Answer.* I supposed it probable that our SAVIOUR would give the explanation first.

*Parson.* I think it by no means unlikely myself, especially as the Gospel of S. John records mostly the events which took place during the latter part of our SAVIOUR's ministry. Still, we must not argue upon probabilities as if they were certainties. One thing, however, is certain, *we* have both the warning and the explanation, whether the paralytic man had the latter or not; and consequently we shall be more inexcusable than he, if we do not profit by it.

III. *Parson.* You say that "an unconfirmed person may plead that he has not had power to resist the various temptations to which he is exposed." Has a child no such power given him?

*Answer.* Yes, at baptism.

*Parson.* Then you should have noticed this, and mentioned, that the additional grace of Confirmation is given, in order to enable us to meet the additional temptations to which we are exposed when we grow up and go out into the world. Otherwise you make Confirmation a Sacrament equal to that of Baptism. How many Sacraments has CHRIST ordained in His Church?

*Answer.* Two only, as generally necessary to salvation.

*Parson.* Does Confirmation answer to that definition?

*Answer.* No, it is not necessary to the salvation of all. Those who die too young to be exposed to the

temptations of the world do not want it; therefore it is not *generally* necessary.

IV. *Parson.* To whom does our SAVIOUR say, "My grace is sufficient for thee?"

*Answer.* To S. Paul.

*Parson.* Upon what occasion?

*Answer.* When S. Paul said he had some temptations to strive against, which he calls "a thorn in the flesh."

*Parson.* That might be quite right, though most people imagine it a bodily infirmity. Still, a bodily infirmity is itself a temptation to impatience and fretfulness, therefore we may say it is *quite* right. What is our SAVIOUR's reason for refusing to take this temptation away?

*Answer.* That His strength was made perfect in weakness.

*Parson.* Which means that CHRIST's strength is more evidently shown forth to the world, when a person naturally weak resists temptation by means of it.

## HEADS OF CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION.

EACH one of the catechists should be supplied with two or three of those explanations of the Catechism, of which so many have been published in the form of question and answer ;—Bather's, Sinclair's, and Bevan's are as good as any. Before attempting to catechise, they should be induced to study these diligently, so as not only to make their own the information conveyed, but to get into the author's style and run of questioning. The Parson also will do well to superintend this in person, and in fact, to have a class of catechists pretty well indoctrinated before the general catechising begins.

But all these books must be considered text-books, not class-books ; they must never be used in the act of catechising. No one will ever become a good catechist who reads his questions instead of asking them, because the very essence of catechising is to catch the idea as it rises in the mind of the catechumen, and to build upon that. It is therefore as impossible to determine beforehand what the questions will be, as to write down beforehand the observations which a man intends to make in the course of conversation. It is different with the Church Catechism : this is a short summary of the Christian Religion, which is to be impressed on the memory ;—in nine cases out of ten it is learned by rote,—in nine cases out of ten it is learned before the child is capable of understanding it ; and it is intended to be so learned, because it forms the foundation for subsequent instruction,—the axioms, as it were, of religion. There is no reason here why the questions should not be put exactly as they are written in the book, because the quality to be exercised in the catechumen here is memory, not understanding. It is the mere sowing of the seed which is afterwards to produce fruit.

As the child grows up, you want him to understand what he has learnt; but if you merely read explanatory questions to him from a book, however good those questions may be, they not only become wearisome, but are regarded merely as "cues" to suggest to the memory following words, instead of questions to elicit from the understanding corresponding thoughts. And, besides this, the perpetual reference to the stereotyped phrases of the book cramps the catechist's own powers of illustration; he becomes unable to use that which he is never called upon to use,—his own thought and his own understanding. A very inferior amount of explanation, made *vivâ voce*, and in a conversational form, will fix the meaning of a given passage in the mind of the catechumen far more surely and permanently than the very best that even Sinclair or Bather ever wrote, if given perpetually in Sinclair's or Bather's own words.

But, on the other hand, few catechists have the subject so completely arranged in their minds as to be able to keep the main thread of the argument before them through all the ramifications of elucidatory questioning and divergent explanation, so as to lead it continually back to the original subject. It is therefore a very useful help to the catechists that they should have the heads of their subject drawn out for them in skeleton, with a sketch of the parallelism between the Bible and the Church Catechism to cast their eye upon, so as to bring back their thoughts to the course of the teaching.

The Parson will find no great difficulty in drawing out such a sketch for his own people, in the way he likes best himself, either from his own memory of the Scriptures, or from a Scripture common-place book, or else from a very useful little tract published some time ago by the Christian Knowledge Society, in which the Church Catechism is proved and explained from Scripture.

The following, which is a little enlarged and altered from one published originally by Burns, and which I conclude is now out of print, will do as well as any other; but the fact is, that the number of texts support-

ing each dogma of the Catechism is so great, that these arrangements may be varied infinitely, and the Parson, knowing what is wanted in his own parish, will always make out a better and more suitable arrangement for himself than he can get in any book whatever.

## I. THE NATURAL STATE OF ALL MEN.

## II. THE CHRISTIAN STATE.

1. Its privileges.
2. Admission into it.
3. Continuance in it.
4. Its obligations.

1. *Repentance,*

or  
*Renunciation*  
of . . .

1. The devil.
2. The world.
3. The flesh.

2. *Faith,*

or  
*Belief in* .

1. GOD the FATHER.
2. GOD the SON.
3. GOD the HOLY GHOST.

3. *Obedience* .

1. Duty towards GOD { First Four Commandments
2. Duty towards my neighbour . . . { Last Six Commandments.
1. The privilege of Prayer . . . { A Child of GOD.

## III. THE CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES . . . . .

2. Means of grace through the Sacraments . . . { A member of CHRIST.
3. The great object of a Christian's life { An inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.

## I. THE NATURAL STATE OF ALL MEN.

1. All subject to death by sin . . . . . } Rom. v. 12.
2. The wrath of GOD the penalty of disobedience . . . } Col. iii. 6.
3. All by nature children of wrath . . . } Ephes. ii. 1—3.

## CHURCH CATECHISM.

Being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath.

## II. THE CHRISTIAN STATE.

1. *Its privileges.*

1. Member of CHRIST . . . } 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.
2. Child of GOD . Gal. iii. 26, 27.
3. Inheritor of the kingdom of heaven } Rom. viii. 16, 17.

{ Wherein (viz. in Baptism) I was made a member of CHRIST, a child of GOD, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.



2. *Admission into it* . Col. i. 12-18.

3. *Baptism* . . . . . { 1 Cor. x. 2.  
Acts xix. 26.  
S. John iii. 5.  
S. Mark i. 8.  
Rom. vi. 6, 7.  
Rom. vi. 11.  
1 S. Pet. ii. 24.  
Ps. v. 5.  
Eph. ii. 3.  
2 Thess. ii. 16.  
1 S. Pet. ii. 7.

4. *Continuance in the same* . . . . . { S. John xv. 1-8.

5. *Its obligations.*

1. Repentance . . { Acts ii. 37, 38.  
S. Luke iii. 7, 8.

or  
Renun- { 1. The devil { S. Matt. xxv. 41.  
ciation of { 2. The world { S. James iv. 4.  
              { 3. The flesh { Rom. viii. 12-14.

2. Faith . . . . . { Heb. xi. 6.  
Acts viii. 36, 37.

or  
Belief in { 1. God the FA-  
              THER . . { Eph. i. 2, 3.  
              Maker of  
              heaven and  
              earth . . { Acts iv. 24-27.  
2. God the SON S. John i. 1, 14.  
              REDEEMER Gal. iv. 4, 5.  
              Ransomer  
              of Mankind } 2 Cor. v. 14.  
3. GOD the  
              HOLY GHOST } Acts v. 1-4.  
              Sanctifier  
              of the *elect* } 1 S. Pet. i. 2.

I heartily thank our heavenly FATHER that He hath called me to this state of salvation, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR. The outward visible sign.

The inward spiritual grace.

A death unto sin.

A new birth unto righteousness.

Being by nature born in sin:

And the children of wrath:

We are hereby made the children of grace.

And I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end.

What is required of persons to be baptized? *Repentance*, whereby they forsake sin.

Why then are infants baptized? &c. Because they promised them both, viz. *repentance and faith*.

What did your godfathers and godmothers then for you? They did promise and vow three things in my name. 1. That I should renounce the devil, &c.

2. That I should believe, &c.

*Faith*, whereby we steadfastly believe the promises of God.

1st, I learn to believe in GOD the FATHER, Who hath made me and all the world.

2nd, In GOD the SON, Who hath redeemed me and all mankind.

3rd, In GOD the HOLY GHOST, Who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God.

3. Obedience . . . S. Matt. xxii. 37-40.

3. That I should keep  
God's Holy Will and  
Commandments, &c.  
What dost thou chiefly  
learn from these Com-  
mandments?

1. Duty  
to-  
wards  
God.

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| First Com-<br>mandment .  | S. Mark xii. 29, 30.  |
|                           | S. John xiv. 23.      |
|                           | Ephes. v. 5.          |
|                           | S. Matt. vi. 24.      |
| Second Com-<br>mandment . | Deut. iv. 15-18.      |
|                           | Acts xvii. 29, 30.    |
|                           | S. John iv. 24.       |
| Third Com-<br>mandment .  | Ps. xcv. 6.           |
|                           | Levit. xix. 12.       |
|                           | 1 Kings viii. 28, 29. |
|                           | Eccles. v. 1.         |
| Fourth Com-<br>mandment . | Philip. ii. 9, 10.    |
|                           | Gen. ii. 3.           |
|                           | S. John xx. 19.       |
|                           | Rev. i. 10.           |
|                           | Acts xx. 7.           |
|                           | 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.     |

What is thy duty to-  
wards God? My duty  
towards God is, &c.

2. Duty  
to-  
wards  
my  
neigh-  
bour.

- |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Fifth Com-<br>mandment .   | Ephes. vi. 1-3.       |
|                            | 1 Tim. v. 4.          |
|                            | 1 S. Pet. ii. 13, 14. |
|                            | 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.   |
| Sixth Com-<br>mandment .   | Col. iii. 22.         |
|                            | Levit. xix. 32.       |
|                            | Philip. ii. 3.        |
|                            | S. Matt. v. 21, 22.   |
| Seventh Com-<br>mandment . | (Marg. reading.)      |
|                            | Ephes. iv. 31.        |
|                            | 1 S. John iii. 15.    |
| Eighth Com-<br>mandment .  | S. Matt. v. 27-29.    |
|                            | (Marg. reading.)      |
|                            | Ephes. v. 3-5.        |
| Ninth Com-<br>mandment .   | 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.     |
|                            | 1 Thess. iv. 6.       |
| Tenth Com-<br>mandment .   | Ephes. iv. 28.        |
|                            | S. James iv. 11.      |
|                            | Ephes. iv. 25.        |
|                            | Heb. xiii. 5.         |
|                            | 1 Tim. vi. 6-10.      |

To love, honour, and  
succour my father and  
mother.

To honour and obey  
the queen, and all, &c.

To submit myself to  
all my governors, teach-  
ers, spiritual pastors and  
masters.

To order myself lowly,  
&c.

To hurt nobody by  
word or deed, to bear no  
malice nor hatred in my  
heart.

To keep my body in  
temperance, soberness,  
and chastity.

To keep my hands from  
picking and stealing.

To keep my tongue  
from evil-speaking, ly-  
ing, and slandering.

Not to covet nor de-  
sire other men's goods;  
but to learn, &c.

## III. THE CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES.

*First Privilege.—The privilege of prayer.*

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Man's weakness . . .   | Rom. vii. 18, 19.  | { My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the Commandments of GOD and to serve Him without His special grace, which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer.<br>The LORD's prayer.<br>I desire my LORD GOD our Heavenly FATHER, Who is the Giver of all goodness, to send His grace unto me, and to all people. |
| 2. Sufficiency of Divine grace . . .  | Phil. iv. 13.  |  |
| 3. Prayer a means of obtaining it . . .   | S. Luke xi. 11-13.   |  |
| 4. The LORD's prayer  | S. Matt. vi. 9-18.   |  |
| 1. Our FATHER Which art in heaven . . .   | { Rom. viii. 14, 15.<br>Eccles. v. 2.                                | { That we may worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him, as we ought to do.   |
| 2. Hallowed be Thy Name . . .   | { 4th Commandment.<br>1 S. Pet. i. 15, 16.<br>Heb. i. 8.             |  |
| 3. Thy kingdom come . . .   | { Rom. xiv. 17.<br>Rev. xi. 15.<br>S. Matt. xxv. 34.                 |  |
| 4. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven . . .                             | { S. Matt. xviii. 10.<br>Ps. ciii. 20, 21.<br>S. Matt. vii. 21.      |  |
| 5. Give us this day our daily bread . .   | { S. Matt. vi. 31-33.<br>2 Thess. iii. 10-12.                        | { That He will send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies.   |
| 6. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us . . | { S. Matt. xviii. 21-35.   | { That He will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins.   |
| 7. Lead us not into temptation . .  | { S. James i. 13, 14.<br>Gen. xxii. 1, 2, 9-12.<br>1 Cor. x. 12, 13. | { That it will please Him to save and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily.<br>And that He will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death.  |
| 8. But deliver us from evil . . .   | { Rom. xvi. 20.<br>2 Tim. iv. 18.                                    | { And this I trust He will do of His mercy and goodness, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And therefore I say, Amen, So be it.   |
| 9. Amen . . .   | 1 Cor. xiv. 15-17.   |  |

*Second Privilege.—The privilege of grace through the ordinances of CHRIST.*

The LORD's Supper :

1. Remembrance . . . 1 Cor. xi. 24.

{ For a continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of CHRIST.

2. Benefits.

In this world . . . S. John vi. 56, 57.

In the world to come . . . } S. John vi. 54.

{ And of the benefits which we receive thereby.

Outward sign . . . S. Matt. xxvi. 26.

{ Bread and wine, which the LORD hath commanded to be received.

Inward part or thing signified } 1 Cor. x. 16.

{ The Body and Blood of CHRIST, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the LORD's Supper.

The nature of the benefits . . . { Deut. viii. 3.  
Ps. lxxviii. 24, 25.  
S. John vi. 48-50.

{ The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of CHRIST, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine.

*Third Privilege.—The privilege of the Inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.*

The LORD's Supper a type of it. } S. John vi. 57.

Preparation for the Holy Communion is the preparation for entering on our inheritance.

1. Self-examination { 2 Cor. xiii. 5.  
1 Cor. xi. 28.
2. Repentance . . . Rom. ii. 4, 5.
3. Amendment . . . S. Luke xv. 24.
4. A lively faith . . { Heb. xi. 6.  
S. James ii. 17.
5. Thankfulness . . S. Luke xxii. 19.
6. Charity . . . { S. Matt. v. 23, 24.  
1 Cor. x. 17.

{ To examine ourselves whether we repent us truly of our former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, have a lively faith in GOD's mercy through CHRIST, with a thankful remembrance of His death, and be in charity with all men.

## PRAYER.

O LORD, Heavenly FATHER, Almighty and Everlasting GOD, Who of Thine infinite goodness towards me, when I was born in sin and a child of wrath, didst vouchsafe to make me a member of CHRIST, and an heir of eternal life ; I most heartily thank Thee for calling me to this state of salvation, and for bestowing upon me such great and precious privileges.

Make me ever mindful of the strict account I shall have to give, at the judgment-seat of CHRIST, of the way in which I fulfil the solemn vows and promises made in my name at my Baptism ; and I most humbly beseech Thee of Thy great mercy, to pardon all my past breaches of the same, and to endue me with the assistance of Thy HOLY SPIRIT, that I may continue steadfast in Thy faith and fear, and improve all those helps to true piety, all those means of grace and edification, which Thou hast appointed in Thy Holy Church ; that I may henceforth walk in newness of life, worthy of that blessed state whereunto Thou hast called me ; so that, keeping myself unspotted from the world, the flesh, and the devil, I may at length attain Thy heavenly promises, through the merits of CHRIST JESUS, my SAVIOUR, to Whom, with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, be all glory and honour, for ever and ever. Amen.



## CHURCH MUSIC AND HYMNODY.

It may seem singular to speak of Church Music as a means of religious teaching, but in practice it will be found that there is none so efficacious. We must not forget, as we are very apt to do, that in all such teaching there are two elements. If we were satisfied with placing instruction before the eye and the understanding of the learner, we should be doing but very little of our duty. Our object is to convey it to his heart, to make it part of his thoughts and of himself. No Christian should ever be able to remember the time when he first became acquainted with such and such Christian truths, any more than he can tell when he first found out that the grass was green and the sky blue; the truths should have been already placed before him, so that his faculties may lay hold of them by degrees, as by degrees they became capable of doing so. That which is acquired by the understanding is retained by the understanding; it is therefore liable at any time to be obscured or overwhelmed by sophistry. A reasoner may at any time of his life be defeated, and, if defeated, convinced, by a reasoner more subtle than himself, while the truth all the time lies on his own side. That which has been imbibed imperceptibly and without effort becomes part of a man's nature and constitution,—it is interwoven with his daily habits, and feelings, and modes of life. It is not indeed altogether impervious to reason; if it were, there would be no such thing in the world as a convert; but it is altogether impervious to sophistry, because it requires not only reason, but a course of reasoning, a new series of feelings, a new cast of thought, to overcome it. It is just what religious

conviction ought to be—prejudice, based upon truth and defended by reason.

For implanting in the mind such feelings as this, music is a most powerful auxiliary. There was a great deal of sound philosophy as well as deep knowledge of human nature in him who said, "Let me make the ballads of a country, let who will make its laws." This is true in all cases, but most especially is it true with the young and with the uneducated. It is a very singular thing that it should be popularly imagined, as I believe it is, that the English are physically incapable of either producing good music or of appreciating it, when, no longer ago than the days of the Tudors, England was quite as eminent for its religious music as Germany is now; and, indeed, there is every reason why we should be a musical nation, proceeding, as we do, from the same Saxon stock as that of the most musical nation in the world.

The neglect of this most powerful instrument of religion—a neglect involving almost the loss of the talent—may be traced to the times of the Puritans, who denounced not only Church music, but music of every sort, to such an extent,<sup>1</sup> that at the Restoration it was found that the very art itself was forgotten. It was absolutely necessary to send the choristers of the King's chapel to Paris for instruction, there being no one in England capable of teaching them. It is to this that we owe the loss of our parish choirs. The art had been put down by violence. The habit had been lost, and it was to be regained only by expense and trouble; this none but wealthy establishments were able to afford; and thus it came to pass, that when the custom of reading the service began to be substituted for the ancient plain song of the English Church, it readily took root, being, in truth, a very great improvement upon the wretched mode of drawling the service into which the plain song had by that time degenerated.

It is a singular coincidence that the English Church should happen to possess no hymnarium, or authorised

<sup>1</sup> "The bigots of that iron time,  
Had called his harmless art a crime."—SCOTT.

collection of hymns; had there been anything of the sort, the science of Church music never could have fallen into such utter disuse. Had hymns appropriated to the seasons been part of the actual service of the Church, means must have been provided for singing them; to read a psalm, that is to say, to read a composition expressly intended for singing, is absurd,—to read a metrical hymn would be so absurd as to be impossible.

And the coincidence is purely accidental. It was no more the intention of the Reformers to omit the metrical part of the ancient services, than it was their intention to omit any other part that was sound. “Our Common Prayer Book,” says Bishop Mant, “derives a great portion of its contents [he might have said almost all its contents] from the Breviary or daily service-book of the Romish Church, purified from corruption and reduced to the standard of the Holy Scripture as professed by the Catholic Church of CHRIST. Together with its other provisions, this Breviary contains a considerable number of hymns used in the regular course of its daily, weekly, and occasional services.”

These it was by no means the intention of the Reformers to omit, for many of them were, as Bishop Mant observes, “altogether scriptural and unexceptionable,” but they could find no competent persons to undertake the translation. Cranmer, indeed, did attempt it himself, but he was so dissatisfied with his own poetical efforts, that, after a fruitless trial with the hymn, “*Salve festa dies*,” he wrote to the King, requesting him that, “as his English verses wanted the grace and faculty which he could wish they had, his Majesty would cause some other to do them in more pleasant English and phrase.”

It would seem that no such person could be found, for the hymn of Charlemagne in the Ordination Service is the only metrical composition of which we have any authorised version; and thus the whole of that portion of Divine worship fell into abeyance in the English Church. But, authorised or not, psalms and hymns the people will have, and ought by right to have,—and

hence the interminable multiplicity of hymns, many of them utterly unsound, with which the Church is deluged.

The fact is, that the Psalm tune has been so vulgarised by Dissenters, and so secularised by certain members of our own Church, while the hymns themselves have been so interpolated, corrupted, and misused, that we have forgotten what Church music and Church poetry is capable of effecting. Had it not been for the magnificent collection of the hymns of Germany, and the Bede Psalter of Sweden, both those Protestant bodies would long ago have forgotten what the doctrines of Christianity are, so far at least as their uneducated classes are concerned.

England possesses what Protestant Germany does not,—a very perfect and very orthodox Liturgy; and what Sweden does not,—a body of ecclesiastics not utterly disproportioned in point of numbers to the wants of the people; that, therefore, which in those countries would amount very nearly to the loss of all knowledge of Christianity, is to us no more than a very serious inconvenience. But a very serious inconvenience it is, and we must remedy it as best we may.

But in this we have two difficulties to surmount: we have not only to restore to the people the love as well as the knowledge of music which they once possessed, but we have to provide them materials also.

With respect to the first, it has always struck me that we have not yet learnt to make our singing congregational. In those churches even where choral service has been restored, we are satisfied with having a *choir*—more or less good, according to circumstances,—but we have not entirely lost the old associations of our youth, and are still content that our *congregation* should be auditors; it is far better, no doubt, that they should be auditors of the choir, than merely auditors of the parish clerk, but our object is that they should be worshippers.

It is far better, in a country church,—and I suspect strongly in a town church also,—that there should be a choral service without a choir; let the whole Church

school be instructed in the choral music, as part of the regular education of the school; establish singing classes for grown-up people, in order to qualify them for doing their duty in church; let singing be a principal part of the Sunday-school instruction, and catechising on the hymn or anthem a regular Sunday lesson; throw open the choir to all who qualify themselves for serving in it; do not be too particular about any other qualifications than those of character and willingness; and then Church music, notwithstanding its long disuse, will stand some chance of becoming once more congregational.

But this implies daily service; it is impossible to have a choral congregation without it. The Sunday Psalms will not become familiar to them, so that they can strike off at once into the accustomed chants, unless those Sunday Psalms have been Daily Psalms also.

My own habit has been on week-days, to begin my part of the service in the usual tone, without considering or appearing to notice whether there are many or few in the Church, or whether those few can or cannot perform their part well in it. I thereby lead my little congregation to understand that their duty is to worship aloud, and that the quality of voice, and the perfection of singing, has nothing to do with the acceptableness of the service. Those who are in the Church feel that they *must* attempt it, and attempting it, find that they can perform it. I will not take upon me to say that such a service is always very harmonious, but I will take upon me to say that such a service makes singing congregational, and that it induces people, children especially, to come to Church. At all events, this plan has stood the test of experience. The choir of Westbourne are, in the strictest sense of the word, volunteers; it is now eight years since I began choral service, and during that time it has never happened that the service has not been chanted from want of a choir.

It would no doubt be impossible to do this with the modern cathedral chant, which requires its full choir and its organ, and sounds poor and jejune if deprived of



any of its four parts. The Gregorian music wants no organ, it is improved, no doubt, by being harmonised for four voices, but it does not require it, it was not written for it, and as the music follows the sense, instead of the ordinary cathedral practice of making the sense subservient to the music, every one can hear and understand it.

There may perhaps be some little difficulty in teaching Gregorian music, because those tones are merely musical reading, and it is therefore absolutely necessary that the singer be taught to read before he attempts to sing, which is not so indispensable in the modern chant, where the measured music not only covers the defects of the reading, but produces defects of its own; to teach singing only may possibly be easier than to teach reading and singing too; but to teach the mere notes, or to teach the tones to those who are already capable of reading and understanding what they read, is a matter of no difficulty whatever, if people are contented with slow progress; progress must always be slow where there is a good deal to be taught, and to gabble or sleep over a Gregorian tone, as is done in cathedrals over their chant, would be absolutely intolerable.

The only way of teaching it to such a class of half-educated people, as we generally meet with, is, first, to read the whole psalm yourself, emphasizing it carefully. Then to explain it, so that the class feel and appreciate what they are going to sing. Then to make them read it, seeing that they attend to the pauses and emphatic words. When they are able to do this, sound the reciting note with a pitch pipe, and let them read it on that, still preserving their pauses and emphases, and, *after that*, it is very easy to add the mediation and cadence. I do not think the organ should be used at all; it may be a very effective addition after the psalm is learnt, but, if used before, it teaches the choir to pay more attention to the music than to the sense; in fact, to sing as they do in cathedrals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The observation made by my choir when I took them for the first time to Chichester Cathedral, "that it was very pretty music, but that

There is no reason why, in admiring the Gregorian music, we should despise, as some do, the modern chants, many of which are very beautiful, and very ecclesiastic in their character. There is room enough in the service for both. As the recitative of the Gregorian is best adapted for the unmeasured verse of the psalms, so the measured music of the modern chant is best adapted to metre. All the good modern chants make admirable hymn tunes, and are more easily learned than any sort of psalm or hymn tune whatever.

But a more difficult and a more responsible duty is the selection of hymns to be sung to them. Bishop Mant, in the preface to his own translation of the ancient Church Hymns, says, that he has translated them for family devotion, as he did not "presume to offer any materials for public worship, because he knows of no consideration which will justify the act or sanction of an individual in contributing to the introduction of forms of singing, any more than forms of praying, into our churches, without legal sanction."

It appears to me that this is over-scrupulousness in the Bishop, as it certainly is inconsistency. He felt no difficulty in sanctioning the use of the Metrical Psalms in his diocese, which, composed like his own hymns, originally for private worship, without half the merit of his own, and without any more authority, have found a place in our Prayer Books, in the absolute dearth of anything better.

But, in truth, when the Church does actually possess hymns, when the only reason why these hymns were not authorised in the English branch of it, was the incapacity

the choristers seemed half asleep"—or of one of them, who on his return from London, informed me that "at Westminster Abbey they did not sing *nearly so badly* as they did at S. Paul's" will convey, as well as anything can, the idea that must strike the mind of those who, having been accustomed to Gregorian recitative, hear, for the first time, the Psalms strained and twisted into musical measures. The country chorister might be a very indifferent judge of music, but he could feel that the sense was sacrificed to the sound. Of course I am not here speaking of that most objectionable and irreverent of all chants, the syllabic adaptation of Gregorian music—the most wanton sacrifice of sense to sound that ever was invented.

city of the Reformers to translate them, when the want of an authorised version is universally felt and acknowledged, and when the only legal authority which could by any possibility sanction them is in abeyance, we are fully justified in doing what is right in our own eyes, to the same extent as the Israelites were in the days of the Judges, and for the very same reason. The Church has a recognised place for the Anthem, in quires and places where they sing, but not having designated what that anthem shall be, she has left it to us to make the selection. A Bishop has a perfect right to object to this or that hymn, just as he has a perfect right to object to this or that sermon; but he has no more right to object to the practice of singing hymns, when the Church has provided a place in the service for such compositions, than he has to object to the practice of preaching sermons, which are sanctioned by the Church in precisely the same manner.

I have myself never scrupled to use any hymn that I considered orthodox and appropriate. If I am not to be trusted in collecting and adapting hymns, I am not to be trusted in composing and preaching sermons—in fact, I do collect them wherever I can find them. I select those for particular seasons which illustrate best the doctrine of that season. These I make my catechumens commit to memory. Learning poetry is in itself a good exercise for the young, and doctrines are more firmly impressed on the mind in this way than in any other. Some of the hymns thus selected are suited to public worship, some for school or family use, some for private edification—and I have no hesitation in putting all that I select to the uses for which they seem best designed. I offer here a few, which I have brought together from different authors and translators, as they appear to me well adapted to the use of catechumens preparing for Confirmation. In many cases I do not know who are the authors or translators—if I did, I should have to apologise to them all, for alterations, adaptations, erasures, and additions which I have made at pleasure.

## I.—ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

*Creator Alme Siderum.*

CREATOR of the starry height,  
 Of hearts believing endless light,  
 JESU, Redeemer, bow Thine ear,  
 Thy suppliants' vows in pity hear.

Who, lest the earth through evil eye  
 Of treacherous fiend should waste and die,  
 With mighty love instinct, wert made  
 The expiring world's all-healing aid.

Who to the Cross that world to win,  
 From common stain of common sin,  
 From Virgin shrine, a Virgin Birth,  
 A spotless Victim issuest forth.

At vision of Whose glory bright,  
 At mention of Whose Name of might,  
 Angels on high and fiends below,  
 In rev'rence or in trembling bow.

Almighty Judge, to Thee we pray,  
 Great Umpire of the last dread day ;  
 Protect us through the unearthly fight,  
 With armour of celestial light.

To GOD the FATHER, and the SON,  
 And HOLY GHOST all praise be done,  
 All honour, might, and glory be,  
 Through all the long eternity.

## II.—WHILE PREPARING FOR CONFIRMATION.

HYMN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

CREATOR SPIRIT, by Whose aid  
 The world's foundations first were laid,  
 Come, visit every humble mind,  
 And pour Thy joys on all mankind ;  
 From sin and sorrow set us free,  
 And make us temples meet for Thee.

Thrice holy Fount ! thrice holy Fire !  
 Our hearts with holy love inspire,  
 Our frailty help, our vice control,  
 And calm the passions of the soul ;  
 Come, and Thy sacred unction bring,  
 To sanctify us while we sing.

Immortal honour, endless fame,  
 Attend the Almighty FATHER's Name ;  
 Let GOD the SON be glorified,  
 Who for the world's redemption died,  
 And equal adoration be,  
 O Blessed Comforter, to Thee.

*Veni, Sancte Spiritus.*

HOLY SPIRIT from on high,  
 Come, and from the op'ning sky,  
     Shed Thy ray of heavenly light ;  
 Come, kind FATHER of the poor,  
 Come, with all Thy bounteous store,  
     Come, of hearts the Inmate bright.

Sweetest Comforter and best,  
 Of the soul most welcome Guest,  
     Presence calm in fev'rish day ;  
 In all toil Refreshment sweet,  
 Cooling Breath 'mid noontide heat,  
     GOD, that wipest all tears away.

Light most Holy, most Divine,  
 In our inmost bosoms shine,  
     Fill Thine own with Thy true Grace ;  
 For without Thy hallowing Flame,  
 Nought in man is free from blame,  
     Nought in all this sinful race.

Wash whate'er of stain is here,  
 Sprinkle what is dry or sear,  
     And the spirit bind and heal ;  
 Bend whate'er is stubborn still,  
 Kindle what is cold and chill,  
     What is true and faithful seal.



Oh, to every faithful heart,  
 LORD, Thy sevenfold gifts impart,  
 That Thine own in Thee may live ;  
 Give the meed Thy grace hath won,  
 Crown the work Thyself hast done,  
 Everlasting gladness give.  
 Amen.

## HELP OF THE HOLY GHOST.

SPIRIT of Truth and Love,  
 Life-giving Holy Dove,  
 Speed forth Thy flight ;  
 Move on the water's face  
 Bearing the lamp of grace,  
 And in earth's darkest place  
 " Let there be light."

Haste, hallow'd Paraclete,  
 Us with Thy glory greet,  
 Wisdom and might ;  
 Bless the pure fontal wave,  
 Nerve us the foe to brave,  
 And through the shadowy grave  
 " Let there be light."  
 Hallelujah.

## III.—FOR THE MORNING OF CONFIRMATION.

WAKE, wake, ye children of the light,  
 Hearken to GOD's own Voice ;  
 With early songs of praise draw nigh,  
 And in His courts rejoice.

Let carnal sloth and faithless fear  
 From every heart be driven ;  
 Spend ye this day as they that hope  
 To spend the rest in heaven.

So shall our souls, most Holy God,  
 Thy gracious influence prove,  
 Enlighten'd by Thy Holy Word,  
 And quicken'd by Thy Love.

Praise to the FATHER and the SON,  
 And O, like praise be Thine,  
 Blest SPIRIT! Who our souls dost fill  
 With Light and Life Divine.

#### IV.—FOR THE SERVICES OF CONFIRMATION.

##### NOON.

COME, HOLY GHOST, our souls inspire,  
 And lighten with celestial fire.  
 Thou the Anointing SPIRIT art  
 Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart.  
 Thy blessed Unction from above,  
 Is comfort, life, and fire of love.

Enable with perpetual light,  
 The dulness of our blinded sight.  
 Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
 With the abundance of Thy grace.  
 Keep far our foes, give peace at home:  
 Where Thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the FATHER, SON,  
 And Thee, of Both, to be but One.  
 That, through the ages all along,  
 This may be our endless song;  
 Praise to Thy eternal merit,  
 FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT.

#### V.—FOR THE EVENING AFTER CONFIRMATION.

##### GOD'S ANGELS.

LORD, above the stars Who reignest,  
 Who the universe hast made,  
 Who with wondrous skill sustainest,  
 What Thy wondrous might arrayed;

Let Thy chosen Angels tend us,  
 Guardians ever at our side;  
 From all taint of guilt defend us.  
 Far from harm our footsteps guide.

Fears and foes alike dispelling  
From our borders fast and far ;  
Every inward tumult quelling,  
Quenching every baleful star.

VI.—FOR THE MORNING OF THE FIRST COMMUNION.

HYMN FOR THE COMMUNION.

BREAD of our life, in mercy broken,  
Wine of the soul in mercy shed,  
By Whom the words of life were spoken,  
And in Whose death our sins are dead ;  
  
Look on the hearts by sorrow broken,  
Look on the tears by sinners shed,  
And be Thy feast to us the token  
That by Thy grace our souls are fed.

VII.—AFTER THE FIRST COMMUNION.

EVENING HYMN.

*Cultor Dei memento.*

CHRISTIAN, ever keep in mind,  
Thee the Font for CHRIST's hath signed,  
Thee the Holy Blood bedew'd,  
Thee the strengthening grace renew'd.

Ere thy head at close of day  
On thy lowly couch thou lay,  
On thy memory and thy breast  
Be the Cross of CHRIST impress'd.

Sin and shame, like shades of night,  
Fade before the Cross's light ;  
Hallow'd thus, the wav'ring will  
And the troubled heart are still.

Far, far hence, dark phantoms fly,  
Haunting demons, come not nigh,  
Ever waiting to betray ;  
Arch-deceiver, hence, away.

Serpent, with thy thousand coils,  
 With thy many winding wiles,  
 With thy deep meandering arts,  
 Ruffling calm and quiet hearts,

Hence ;—for CHRIST, yea, CHRIST, is here,  
 At His token disappear ;  
 Lo, the sign thou well hast known,  
 Bids thy cursed crew be gone.

Though the body listless lie,  
 Clos'd awhile the weary eye,  
 Yet the soul in very sleep,  
 Shall with CHRIST her vigil keep.

To th' Eternal Three in One,  
 FATHER and co-equal SON,  
 King of kings, and SPIRIT blest,  
 Endless glory be address'd.

#### MORNING.

“They will go from strength to strength : and unto the God of gods  
 appeareth every one of them in Sion.”

PUT from us, O LORD, we pray,  
 Of darkness the unfruitful deeds,  
 And keep us safely in the way,  
 That to Thy holy presence leads.

Each one of us has duly sworn,  
 Against our Master's foe to fight,  
 Beneath the Cross's banner, borne  
 By Him Who darkness changed to light.

He that right manfully would stand,  
 The devil, world, and flesh to quell,  
 Keeps anxious watch on either hand,  
 In his LORD's armour fenced well.

The shield of faith is o'er him spread,  
 To guard from Satan's fiery dart,  
 Salvation's helmet keeps his head,  
 And righteousness protects his heart.

The girdle of his loins is truth,  
 His sword the piercing Word of GOD;  
 He thus sets forth in earliest youth  
 The way GOD's saints before have trod.

And he proceeds from strength to strength,  
 Forgetting all the trials past;  
 His eyes still fix'd, where he at length  
 May hope eternal rest at last.

*Puguate, Christi Milites.*

SOLDIERS, who to CHRIST belong,  
 In your burnish'd faith be strong,  
 For GOD's promise it is sure,  
 His rewards they shall endure.

Come away,  
 Where are no shadows in a glass,  
 Where are no things that come and pass  
 To decay;  
 But the leaf that shall not fade,  
 And the lights that throw no shade.  
 Ever stay,  
 Where the happy skies above,  
 Are the home of them that love,  
 All the day;  
 And good spirits o'er our head,  
 As on happy stars they tread,  
 Sing alway.  
 Here on earth ye can but clasp,  
 Things that perish in the grasp;  
 While ye may  
 To the heavens lift your eyes,  
 GOD Himself shall be your prize,  
 Come away.

With the happy, heavenly host,  
 To FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST  
 Sing; for His promise it is sure,  
 His rewards they shall endure.



## THE CLASS LECTURE.

IN all matters in which the conscience is concerned,—that is to say, on all matters of duty,—the Parson will naturally see his catechumens singly. This does not mean necessarily *alone*, because it is quite right that they should come, and they frequently do come, attended by some friend or relation,—some sponsor in fact. It does not mean alone, but it does mean that he cannot receive two or three catechumens at once. The subject of his conversation is the faults, the weaknesses, the peculiar temptations of the particular individual to whom he is speaking, which are to be amended and guarded against by that individual himself, aided, it may be, by his friend or sponsor, who is interested in the same thing; but this will not apply to two or three catechumens, each of whom has his own conscience to attend to.

But in all matters which relate to explanation, the case is different; here every member of a well-assorted class helps the rest, and contributes his quota to the common stock of intelligence. Classes such as these cannot, however, be arranged before the second or third week, because, before that time, the parson will not have got sufficient insight into the several capacities, or pursuits, or steadiness, or regularity of his catechumens, or of their private friendships or companionships, to be able to classify and assort them; and everything depends on the class being well assorted. It should not, if it can be avoided, consist of more than six or seven members, and of these no one ought to be very much before or behind the others. The great object is, that all shall take an equal part in the lecture, and that none shall be thrown

into the shade by the superior attainments of any of the rest. Lectures such as these, when well arranged, are perhaps the most effective, certainly the most popular, means of preparation which a Parson can employ.

These lectures are very easy to give; a well-assorted class, who have been in the habit of associating together, and who, remembering their school-days, are well accustomed to the Parson's mode of catechising and explaining, soon lose their shyness, and enter into the spirit of the conversation.

But easy as it may be to give such lectures, it is by no means easy to write them; on paper they look stiff and unnatural, or else become excessively tedious. In most cases there will be a multitude of leading questions, which it is absolutely necessary to put, but which, to a reader who sees at a glance the object aimed at, are wearisome in the extreme. Indeed, unless the catechumens are quick and intelligent, it is absolutely impossible to reduce this kind of lecture to writing at all.

To obviate these two difficulties, and to ensure that this, which I offer as a specimen, should be a *bonâ fide* lecture, not an invention of my own,—should be natural, and should be readable,—I sent for a class of my former catechumens, whom I could depend upon, and read with them the 15th chapter of S. Luke, which is one of those which I always select as a Confirmation subject. It is not an average lecture, certainly, because the catechumens in this instance are the four pupil-teachers of Westbourne School, who, it may easily be supposed, are readier and more intelligent than others of their class; still they are all young people, who have had no farther education than the school itself supplies, and may be considered as fair specimens of what that class is capable of. The manner in which the lecture was taken down is this: each one noted his or her own answers, and when the lecture was finished, one of the party remained in my study, and, from these notes, drew up under my inspection the lecture as it now stands.

The class which I assembled on this occasion is, it will be observed, a mixed class, composed of girls and boys,

—or, I might almost say, of young women and young men. I am myself very partial to this mode of teaching, not only for schools, but for catechumens of a more advanced age also. That it is easier to teach classes so composed, no one doubts; but a great many do doubt the propriety of so teaching them on moral grounds. I take my stand on educational grounds certainly, but I take it on moral grounds also.

My theory is, that if God intended men and women to live together in the same society, it is just as much our duty to teach those boys and girls, who are hereafter to become men and women, to behave towards each other with propriety, modesty, and decorum, as it is to teach them their Catechism on their “Faith and Duty;” and that teaching of every kind, and this especially, is a matter of practice rather than of theory. Scotland and Ireland both boast their superior degree of morality in this respect to that of England, and the latter with some truth; yet both in Scotland and Ireland boys and girls of the labouring classes, and very frequently of the higher classes also, are generally educated together.

In the school at Westbourne I generally examine boys and girls together, and I find that this always produces a greater degree of attention and emulation, each being ashamed to lose credit in the eyes of the other.

In the playground they have full permission to play together, if they like (which is much the best security we possess against their wandering away together); but they very seldom do play together, because boys’ amusements and girls’ amusements are of a different character, and if, as happens at rare intervals, I do see a dozen boys and girls going down a slide together in the winter, or engaged in a game of rounders in summer, I believe both parties are improved by their temporary coalition.

It is a general principle that, if you would make people trustworthy, you must trust them; and upon this principle I have always acted with the pupil-teachers, for I have followed out the system of pupil-teachers at Westbourne School for years before it ever entered into the mind of Government to appoint them, and from

these that school has turned out six or seven schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, with every one of whom we have reason to be satisfied.

Long before the Committee of Council wrote to us, long before there was any Committee of Council on Education at all, I ventured to advise my schoolmaster and schoolmistress to teach their respective subordinates together, to make a class of them, to teach them their duties towards each other, but in no way to discourage such intimacy as might innocently exist between those engaged in similar occupations. This practice we continue still, notwithstanding the cautions which we receive yearly from the Minutes of Council. Many of our young people have grown up, and as yet we have had no reason to repent our confidence; two or three of them are married, and it is singular, and not a little to my disappointment, that they have in no case married among themselves, but have preferred strangers.

I am not saying that there is no danger in this system; I see the danger perfectly, and always have seen it: but in fourteen years I have not met with anything to shake my trust in my own theory, and it would not be a light thing that would shake it now. It is better that one should fall, if it should so happen, while twenty others have learnt that moral restraint which is necessary for them after they are emancipated from all control of ours, than that every one should be preserved from actual sin by actual supervision for the present, and then be launched into the world to fall into it, from want of that self-respect and self-control, which we should have taught them, but did not. We should not forget that our responsibility extends far beyond the time when our dependents are actually under our teaching.

The same rule we should carry out to a certain degree with respect to catechumens preparing for Confirmation, and with them, as with school-children, it is far easier to teach a mixed class than a class composed entirely of either sex,—I say, *to a certain degree*—for the rule does not at all apply to strangers, who have not been brought up under our eye, or who are associated together now



for the first time. Here the rule would not hold good at all, and here the sexes must not be classed together on any account.

Neither in the case of those who have grown up under our eye must the ordinary precautions be neglected. Young men and young women, however well taught, are but young men and young women after all. If it is necessary to assemble a mixed class after dark, the girls may easily be dismissed to their homes, while the boys are occupied for ten minutes or so, in ascertaining by rule and compass the precise number of miles between Jerusalem and Jericho, or verifying two parallel passages by an investigation of Cruden, or even in putting the books and chairs away, and sweeping the carpet, on which there will always be dirt enough left to make a very good reason of it. Or, again, two or three mothers,—or, what is better, maiden aunts, if they are to be had,—may be invited, and, if they can possibly find time, they are all glad enough to come to a class lecture. Above all things, the catechumens should never be kept waiting in an anteroom; let them be admitted as they come,—the Parson surely will have something to say to the early-comers; and let those who come late be sent back at once,—the Parson is very sorry, but he cannot disturb the lecture when once begun; let no excuse be admitted, however good, and they will none of them be late next time.

In all these arrangements no Parson can go far wrong if he will just consider it the case of his own daughters, and ask himself to what extent he would trust them in the society of young men of their own rank, and what unseen checks he would in their case put upon too familiar an intercourse. There is no so great difference between one young woman and another young woman, and if he attempt to put a greater restraint upon his female catechumens than he would upon his daughters, he will fail, and so he ought. He must not expose the one to unnecessary temptations any more than he would the other, but, he may depend upon it, that all the supervision that he or his subordinates can exercise will



avail very little, if that is all that he trusts to. If any credit is to be placed in the record of Spanish or Italian manners which we find in their works of fiction, the duenna and the lock and key prove in practice but very indifferent safeguards. Nothing is a safeguard but religious duty and a sense of self-respect, and this last is grievously impaired, if not destroyed altogether, by suspicion and distrust.

#### A CLASS LECTURE ON S. LUKE XV.

“Open your Bibles at the 15th chapter of S. Luke’s Gospel,” said the Parson. “I want you to have a clear idea, not only of the mercy of God, but also of the way in which He restores penitent sinners to the state of grace which they had forfeited. Read me the first two verses.”

“Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”

“A good deal is to be learnt,” resumed the Parson, “simply by considering the times and occasions in the Bible. We must not overlook even the little word ‘then.’ What had our SAVIOUR been doing or saying in the preceding chapter, which induced the sinners to draw near to Him?”

“He had been telling them of the master of the house sending his servants into the streets and lanes of the city, to bring to him the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind,” said A., whose quick eye had caught sight of the parable of the Great Supper.

“Yes,” said the Parson; “and here let me caution you of one difference between ourselves and those people to whom the LORD was speaking. Though the Old Testament is not without its mercies, it is far more a book of God’s judgments than the New. These people were so much in the habit of regarding Him as a God of justice, rather than as a God of mercy, that it was

far more necessary for our SAVIOUR to explain the infinity of God's mercies to them, than it would be to explain them to us. We have heard so much about them, that our danger is that we should forget that the God of mercy is a God of justice also. Hence the necessity of repeating the lesson, which He does three times, but each time with such varieties as to form a fresh and additional piece of instruction. Now, tell me what the two first parables of the chapter are about, and observe the points in which they are alike, and those on which they differ."

"We have first," said B., "the story of a Shepherd losing one of his sheep, which he is pasturing in the wilderness, leaving the flock in order to look after the lost one, and feeling more joy at having recovered it than in the rest which had never strayed."

"Of course you can explain it?" said the Parson.

"The Shepherd is our SAVIOUR," said B., "His flock ourselves, the wilderness the world, and the lost one a sinner; while the joy felt by the shepherd represents the joy that He would have us understand He feels at the recovery of a lost one."

"Now D.," said the Parson, "look at the next parable, the main sentiment of which your sister has rightly represented, in explaining the first, and tell me what are the points of difference between it and the preceding."

"Instead of a man it is a woman," said D.

"Yes," said the Parson; "and instead of a wilderness it is a house that is now searched—all the rest is precisely the same. Who is called the spouse of CHRIST?"

"The Church," said J.

"The object of these two parables, then, taken together," said the Parson, "is to show us the pains taken by our SAVIOUR for the restoration of each individual sinner, and the joy which attends the success of His efforts; and at the same time to point out that He has committed precisely the same office to the Church, with this single exception;—that whereas His own care and His own labour extends over the wide world, typified by

the wilderness, the care of the Church is limited to that portion specially assigned to her—the nation, or diocese, or parish, as it may be, committed to her charge. This is not intended to check her missions, but to remind her of a thing we are very apt to forget, that though we are to do good to all men, our special office is to them ‘who are of the household of faith.’ In fact, we are obeying the command of our second parable at this very moment in preparing for this Confirmation. The Church is, as it were, sweeping her house, not only counting up CHRIST’S treasures, which are still safe, but looking for those which, for the time, are lost or mislaid; and rejoicing over them as she finds them. Go on now with the next parable, which in its general plan is similar to the other two, but which enters more into the details of our restoration, discouraging an idea which the other two parables, taken separately, might have raised in our minds—that the SAVIOUR would do all for us, and that our own desires and our own efforts were not required. The other two parables you see simply represent GOD as a GOD of mercy, rejoicing whenever a sinner renders himself capable of receiving forgiveness; but this enters more into detail, it distinguishes between the forgiveness by which GOD restores us from the curse of original sin, and the forgiveness by which He repairs the losses we have sustained by our voluntary departure from grace given. The former is gratuitous, the latter must be attended with good will and faithful exertion on our part. The one, for distinction’s sake we call Regeneration, the other Renewal. Who can tell me what is the meaning of Regeneration?”

“Creating a man afresh,” said D., “in the image of GOD, which image he had lost by the necessary consequences of the fall. ‘Created anew in righteousness, and true holiness.’”

“What then do you mean by Renewal?” said the Parson.

“Restoring whatever has been decayed by the fraud

and malice of the devil, or by our own carnal will and frailness," said D.

"Or, in plain English," said the Parson, "the difference between Regeneration and Renewal is the difference between making and mending. A thing may be mended many times, it can be made but once. It may not be our own personal fault that we are lying under the corruption of original sin, and therefore God may, and generally does, give us the forgiveness freely; but it is our own fault if we fall away from grace given, therefore, before He will renew us, He generally requires some voluntary act of faith on our part. You have been regenerated freely, but by this time you must be beginning to see your want of renewal. How is the continual sanctification of the HOLY GHOST taught in the Catechism?"

"Sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God," said B.—"the present tense; not sanctified, the past; whereas, JESUS CHRIST is just before represented not as redeeming, but as having redeemed."

"This parable," said the Parson, "may be taken either with reference to the Jew and Gentile, as represented by the two brothers, or the brothers may be considered as types of two classes of churchmen. I would rather take the latter interpretation to-day, as best suited to our case. Find out, then, from the two verses quoted, why the parable relates to two churchmen, and not to any two men?"

"Because," said A., "the younger asks for the portion of goods that falleth to him, that is to say, belongs to him now. If the portion of goods means God's grace, men generally can claim no part as belonging to them of right, but Christians can."

"Why can Christians?" said the Parson.

"Because," said A., "it comes with the covenants of their Baptism, and that which is promised by God may be said to belong to the person to whom it is promised, because it is secured to him on the credit of God's truth."

"The meaning of divided?" said the Parson.

"Gave them His grace in such portions as was suited to them, as more fully explained in the parable of the Talents," said J.

"Read the next four verses, 13, 14, 15, 16."

"Into a far country ; what does that mean?"

"The world which is far from God," said D.

"Do you mean that blame is implied here?" said the Parson. There was no answer, and the Parson continued. "I think not myself. I think that the younger son was simply doing what you are about to do—he was going out into the world to gain his livelihood in it. You observe, the father lets him go without any remonstrance. We are not required to come out of the world in order to serve God, but to do our duty in that state of life into which God has called us.—But he wasted his substance?"

"His grace," said D., interjectionally.

"In riotous living?"

"In sin," said D.

"No," said the Parson. "I do not think we have brought him to sin yet ; it is rather heedlessness, thoughtlessness, forgetfulness of his duty, and eagerness in pursuit of his pleasure, that is implied. And I beg you to observe, that this alone was sufficient to waste his substance ; it did not require actual sin. His grace was the talent in the napkin—it was not wanted for riotous living. It was, therefore, not exercised, and not being employed it was withdrawn—And when he had spent all?"

"Lost all the grace given him," said D.

"There arose a mighty famine in that land?"

"There came a sore affliction upon him," said J.

"Yes," said the Parson ; "either a public calamity in which he partook, or even a private affliction. And he began to be in want. Observe, this could never have happened to him, had he not first spent his substance, for otherwise affliction only brings us nearer to God. In the present case this did not happen, for he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country—what country?"

"The world—a worldly-minded man," said B.



"And what did the worldly-minded man do for him?"

"He sent him into the fields to feed swine."

"Observe," said the Parson, "this is the first definite breach of God's laws—why is it so?"

"Because swine being, according to God's law, unclean, he was engaged in a positively forbidden business."

"This is a very important lesson," said the Parson. "Affliction, like any other of God's gifts, is intended to bring us nearer to Him,—and it does bring us nearer to Him. 'Before I was troubled I went wrong,' said David, 'but now I have kept Thy Commandments;' but, like any other of God's gifts, if it falls upon a heart unfitted for it, it works harm instead of good. This is just the case of a respectable man who has met with some great misfortune,—say, for instance, the loss of his wife,—and who takes to drink to drive away his sorrow. Depend upon it that man had wasted his substance long ago, not in sin, but by neglecting to use it; when it was wanted, it was not forthcoming, so he joined himself to a citizen of that country; he did as a mere worldly man might do, and took to feeding swine, and, we may add, would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. Explain that, D.: what is 'fain'?"

"He would if he could," said D.; "but what the swine did eat were mere husks, which look like full grains, but turn out empty when we use them, like this world's pleasures."

"Yes," said the Parson, "and no man gave unto him, for to comfort a man while he remains in such a state of mind as that, is altogether beyond man's work."

"Now read from the 17th to the 24th verse."

"Came to himself," said the Parson; "why not came to a better frame of mind?"

"Because," said A., "a man has but to come to himself,—that is, to what he was when his FATHER divided to him his substance at his Baptism; it is not a new state that he wants, only a return to himself."

"Show me this from the Baptismal service," said the Parson.

"'May lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.'"

“Show it me, J., from the Catechism.”

“‘And I heartily thank our heavenly FATHER that He hath called me to this state of salvation, and I pray unto God to give me His grace,’ not that I may become better, but ‘that I may continue in the same unto my life’s end.’”

“Quite right,” said the Parson; “Baptism is remission of sin,—that is to say, innocence in God’s sight; we may fall from this, and by God’s grace and our own most sincere repentance and hearty endeavours, may in some sort return to it, but we can never be more than innocent,—to be more would make us meritorious or deserving in our own proper nature. ‘Have bread enough and to spare,’—how do you render that, B., distinguishing between hired servants and sons?”

“How many Christians, who are not, like ourselves, Churchmen, have enough of God’s grace to carry them through the trials of this world.”

“To ‘spare,’” said the Parson, “is merely an expression to show us the fulness of God’s grace; no one can have more than enough of it. Prove this.”

“‘He that had gathered much had nothing over,’ says S. Paul, quoting from Moses, ‘and he that gathered little had no lack.’”

“A very good quotation,” said the Parson; “but, observe, they all gathered,—that is to say, they all exerted themselves according to their ability. You recollect S. Paul, in the text you have just quoted, presupposes a willing mind, and that is just the point I am going to show you by a comparison of the 18th and 20th verses of the parable: ‘I will arise,’ the thought, and ‘he arose,’ the action. What says the Collect for Easter Day?”

“It prays,” said A., “that God would put into our minds good desires, and that He would enable us to bring them to good effect.”

“Exactly,” said the Parson, “both these are God’s gifts, but when do we find the father in the parable going to meet his son?”

“After he arose,” said J.,—“after he had put his thoughts into action.”

“And yet,” said the Parson, “God knows our thoughts,—nay, He suggests them; He comes to meet us, no doubt, when we are yet a long way off; but He does require something on our part to prove that we are in earnest: we must arise, as well as say we will arise. I never heard of any blessing given to good thoughts,—they are God’s, not ours: He it is Who puts them into our minds, but our actions are our own; they may be done by the help of His grace, just as we dig by the help of a spade, and could not dig without one, but it is we who do it. Here lies the difference on our parts between Regeneration and Renewal—repent and be baptized, and do works meet for repentance,—not do works meet for repentance first, and be baptized afterwards. Baptism is free, but when you are baptized, and have received the necessary grace, then put that grace to the use it was intended for; if you have not done so, God may forgive you and renew you, but He will first require you to do it.

“We need not now speak about the penitence and humility necessary for a man in such a situation, for you understand that, only take great care that on such occasions you do not fall into the common mistake of thinking yourselves more religious than you were; we will pass over that, and explain the robe and the ring.”

“I suppose,” said J., “the robe refers to the *khelât*, a dress of honour mentioned by Burder, and the ring to the symbol of command.”

“Yes,” said the Parson, “and these things encourage us to hope that it is possible for us to be fully reinstated in our FATHER’S favour even in this life; but in what state would a man be who has come to his father’s house starving?—not very fit for undertaking the work of the hired servant which he was so ready to accept.”

“No,” said J., “I suppose he must be in a weakly state, and altogether unfit for work.”

“Yes,” said the Parson, “notwithstanding the robe and the ring: this is not an uncommon mistake when we are brought again to God, we are anxious to work in His service, which we have thus taken up afresh, and we

forget that our own misdeeds have rendered us unfit for the labour. What does a starving man want?"

"Nourishment," said B.: "and that is expressed by the fatted calf, the choicest and best food the father had to give him."

"And what is that?" said the Parson.

"The strengthening and refreshing of the soul by the Body and Blood of CHRIST, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine."

"Do not forget that this is our nourishment, without which our souls are starving and unfit for work."

"There is one very instructive part of the parable," continued the Parson, "which I have no doubt our SAVIOUR put into it, in order to correct a misapprehension that might well have arisen in the minds of men not very well accustomed to meditate on God's mercies."

"It was natural that they should infer, that if so much pains were taken for the conversion of a sinner, and so much joy prevailed in heaven at his repentance,—and, if he were received again with the robe, the ring, and the fatted calf,—that the state of a repentant sinner was really better than that of a just man who needed no repentance. Therefore our SAVIOUR puts this natural feeling into words, and imagines an eldest son, who had served his father faithfully, and who expresses a natural astonishment and discontent at the very great honour shown to his erring brother, compared with the strictness under which he has himself always been restrained. First, how do you reconcile the expression, 'Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment,'—which, you observe, the father does not at all deny or reprove,—with the equally true sentiment that we have 'all come short of the glory of God?'"

"I suppose," said A., "the distinction must be referred to sins of habit, sins of wilfulness, and such like; while sins of infirmity, and those which, being repented of as soon as they are committed, and not repeated, may be called casual sins,—the latter may therefore, for

CHRIST'S sake, be considered as continuing in his state of justification."

"Show, then, from this parable, that, notwithstanding the joy of the father, and notwithstanding the honour shown to the repentant son, he who has not stained his baptismal robe is in a higher state of blessedness."

"'Son,'" said A., reading the last verse of the chapter, "'thou art ever with me: all that I have is thine.'"

"That is the point I would have you bear in mind," said the Parson; "you are all about to start on your separate courses through life; you are all going to receive strength from God, to enable you to perform your duties. You *can* do them; His grace is sufficient for you; now keep your innocence and your faithfulness. It is a blessed thing, no doubt, for those who have fallen from this estate, to reflect that there will be joy in heaven when, having been dead, they are alive again, and having been lost, they are found, but it will be far more blessed to remember that we are ever with our Heavenly FATHER, and that all that He hath is ours."



## CATECHETICAL LECTURES.

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THE general catechetical lecture is only another form of public catechising. I adopted it originally as a sort of transition between the afternoon sermon and the afternoon catechising prescribed by the Rubric; but I was induced to continue it after my people had become accustomed to its catechetical arrangement, because I considered it to combine the advantages of both methods of teaching. It is supposed, of course, to take place in church, from the reading desk, after the second lesson, and is intended, at least, as much for the edification of the parish at large, as it is for that of the catechumens: in fact, the catechumens should not be compelled, or even urged, to take part in it; some are not qualified for it, to some it would be injurious. A certain number of convenient seats should be reserved for those who wish to be catechised in public, and the Parson need never fear having too few candidates. The difficulty lies generally in making the selection.

The idea of the catechetical lecture is taken from the practice in courts of law, the Parson makes his statement first, and then examines the witnesses, to prove it.

The advantages of the plan are these—in catechising it is always necessary to put questions apparently irrelevant, partly in order to give confidence, partly as a foundation for other questions bearing more immediately on the subject in hand. The minds of the congregation are by these means very frequently led away from the drift of the argument or explanation, particularly in those cases in which the children do not answer

clearly, and thus they carry off no very definite idea after all of what the Parson has been explaining.

In the catechetical lectures, a certain proposition or portion of the subject is laid down which must not be so long or so complete, but that the people can readily bear it in mind; when the examination takes place, the congregation bearing the object in mind, easily distinguish between the irrelevant or introductory questions, and those which actually bear upon the subject to be explained, while the change from speech to questioning occurs with sufficient frequency to keep alive the attention both of the auditors and the participators in this exercise.

The lectures which follow are my earliest attempts in this mode of teaching, those which I have given subsequently, have been, for the most part extempore or from notes; but these earliest have been the models of them all. In the first of these lectures I have introduced the leading questions at some length, taking them either from Bevan, or from some other of the numerous catechetical books; not that I mean it to be understood that these actual questions were asked, but in order to give some idea of the form of questioning. It is impossible to put down any particular questions beforehand, no catechist can tell the train of thought which will be suggested by any answer that he may receive, so that if he writes down his questions, the chances are that every one that he asks after the three or four first will be different, either in form or substance, from those which he had intended to ask. One thing should be especially avoided, and that is, that the catechumens should know beforehand the precise form in which the questions will be put; this will immediately impart to the whole exercise a stiffness and formality which is intolerable.

I do not hesitate to say that this, whether it take the form of the catechetical lecture, or of simple catechising, is by far the most difficult part of a Parson's duty, and this is the real reason why the afternoon sermon is so frequently substituted for the afternoon catechising.

It requires no great amount of talent to catechise ; any one, even of the most moderate abilities may do it ; but it requires an amount of labour which those who have never attempted it, are unable even to conceive.

No man can catechise unless he is not only thoroughly acquainted with his subject, but fully imbued with it ; he must be able to catch at once the distant bearing of an imperfect answer, to see where the catechumen dimly conceives, and where he is unable to apprehend a particular point ; he must see at once what supplementary question will bring out a dark passage, or convey a missing idea ; he must have his subject so well in hand, that he can take up the different threads of it, and unravel immediately any little confusion into which it may be thrown ; he must be quick and ready too in taking up his points without a moment's consideration, or he will find that the attention of his auditors is flagging, and the thoughts of his catechumens adrift. Above all things, he must sedulously avoid that most common of all faults, preaching his questions and making long rambling interrogations, which by no ingenuity can be answered, except in the words yes and no. The effect of this is not less distracting to the catechumens, than it is distressing to the audience.

But besides being thoroughly familiar with his subject, he must be thoroughly acquainted with his people also, they must have become familiarised with his style of questioning, and accustomed to his explanations, before they meet him in church ; and he, on the other hand, must be able to pitch at once on any individual, and to adapt to his particular comprehension the question which he puts to him.

All this, no doubt, may be effected without any especial talents or requirements, it is quite within the reach of very moderate attainments. I have seen it done admirably by pupil teachers, and by mistresses of dame schools, who could neither write nor spell the very questions they asked. But there is only one way of learning to catechise, and that is by constant practice and downright hard work.

There is no so certain a test of a Parson's past labours as his present power of catechising; there is no proof that he has adequately taught either himself or his catechumens, so absolutely infallible, as his catechumens' power of answering him in church. Shyness in public is only another name for a secret consciousness of some deficiency.

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## LECTURE I.

### ON THE CATECHISM.

It was once the custom of the English Church, always, and as a matter of course, to catechise the children of the parish after the Second Lesson. If you look at the Rubric after the Catechism you will see—"The Curate of every parish shall diligently, upon Sundays and holy days, after the Second Lesson at Evening Prayer, openly in the Church instruct and examine so many of the children of his parish sent unto him as he shall think convenient, in some part of the Catechism."

That is, not all or any of the children of the parish, but those whose answers he thinks may be made useful to his general teaching.

This, no doubt, did great good to the children, because all those who went to school, or even those who did not, would be anxious to make themselves fit for the great privilege of explaining God's Word before the congregation. Sponsors naturally remembered the promise they had themselves made when they saw the children they had undertaken to instruct brought out in the Church, and could not but be aware that while the priest was examining how much the children knew of their faith and their duty, he was at the same time examining and proving how far the sponsors had performed their promise. When I say sponsors, of course I mean parents also—they are sponsors by nature, the

others are sponsors by agreement. When, therefore, I say sponsors, I mean all who are bound to see children christianly and virtuously brought up—fathers and mothers, godfathers and godmothers, schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, and, above all, the Parson of the parish and his curate. We are all being examined before God to see how we have done one of the most important duties which God has trusted to our care.

But besides this, besides the good it does the children in making them learn their duties to God and man, and in putting us sponsors in mind of our duties towards the children—besides all this, catechising has this good, that we all need to be put in mind of our profession, just as much as the children need to be taught it. And we are taught it easier and better by watching the answers given, and seeing how far they are correct, than by any amount of reading or preaching.

Most of you know that I have a class of children whom I examine and catechise in the Bible for an hour every day of the week, after morning service.<sup>1</sup> I do not at all hesitate to say, that the person who profits most by this is myself. I learn, and remember, and work out things that I should never have thought of otherwise.

One of the greatest preachers that ever we had said, when he was an old man, “When I think of it, I could quarrel even with my sermons, they have taken up so much time from catechising.”

The custom of public catechising was gradually dropped, I believe, from mere idleness. It is much the most difficult thing a Parson has to do—not that it requires great learning or cleverness, but a great deal of time and trouble; because he must first prepare himself and then prepare the children. All this required so much time that many Parsons began merely to ask the words of the Church Catechism, without seeing that any one understood the meaning; and then, by degrees, an evening sermon after the service took the place of the catechetical lecture during the service. The even-

<sup>1</sup> This refers to times before the school was properly organised.



ing sermon is quite a new thing. Many of you are old enough to recollect when there was none in this parish.

What I mean to do is this. I will take some subject from the Catechism, follow it up by question and answer, till we are quite satisfied that the children understand it, and by that time we shall all of us understand it ourselves. I will then add some observations on it myself, and then, according as we have time, pass on to another portion. Thus we shall ourselves become better acquainted with our profession—for, in truth, the Catechism is a complete summary of all our faith, and all our duty; and he who knows the meaning of every part of it, and orders his life accordingly, will not be far from the kingdom of God.

I have chosen these children principally because they, having heard of my intention, entered into my plans, and offered themselves willingly. I shall be quite ready to take any one else, not only from the three schools, but also from among any of the parishioners. In those times when catechising was common in England, all those were catechised in this manner who had not been confirmed. Hence the word catechumens, which generally signifies those who have not as yet partaken of the LORD'S Supper.

One word to you children—in school, or on common occasions, you are in the habit of answering me each or all of you together just as you find yourselves able to answer—while I, who am accustomed to it, catch your words, and tell you which is right. This is a very good plan for school, because it makes you quick and ready; but you must not forget now that you are actually taking part in the worship of Almighty God—speaking in His house and in His presence. Speak, therefore, one at a time, as I point—you shall all have the opportunity of answering in your turn—and speak with reverence; but I have no objection that any one of you who can answer a question which another cannot, should hold out his hand.

The subject that I shall take first is the Christian Covenant, upon which indeed all our obligations of either

faith or duty depend. I will show you that the reason why we are bound to do and believe is, that we have promised so to do, and the reason why we have a right and title to heaven is, that God has promised,—that these two sets of promises depend the one upon the other, like those of any other covenant,—and that we claim the fulfilment of them on God's part in some sense as a right,—that is, not for our worthiness, but because of the truth of Him Who promised.

How many names have you?  
Which of these had you at your birth?  
Where did you get the other?  
What is it called?  
Why?  
Who gave it you?

First of all, let us see what God's promises are :—

What is the first thing you were made at Baptism?

Mention the meaning of the word.

What is a member?

A part of whose body were you made a member of when you were baptized?

What is CHRIST'S Body? Eph. i. 22, 23.

What do you mean by the word Church? Acts ii. 42—47.

Whose body were you made members of when you were baptized?

What persons then are made members of CHRIST?

When our SAVIOUR called to Saul out of heaven, what did He say?

If you saw one person ill-using another you might say, Why do you ill-use that person. Did our SAVIOUR say so?

What did He say?

Why did He use the words "Persecutest *Me*," instead of the words "Persecutest My people, or My disciples?"

Now let us sum up what we have just heard. We have seen that at Baptism we were made members of CHRIST,—that is to say, that our condition bears the same relation to Him that one of our members or limbs does to our head. S. Paul argues against a gross sin by saying "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of CHRIST?" Could we but bear in mind, as we ought, how closely we are joined to the LORD after having been baptized into His Body, which is the Church, we should more fully feel the sin of dishonouring His members,—that is to say, ourselves,—the sin of crucifying Him afresh, and putting Him to an open shame,

“for,” says S. Paul, “we are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and His Bones.”

When you were made a member of CHRIST, what else were you made?

How does being a member of CHRIST make you a child of GOD?

Are we children of GOD in the same way that CHRIST is? (Nicene Creed.)

What is to adopt?

Whose child are you by nature?

How are you GOD's child?

When did you become so?

Regenerate means born again.—Must we be born again before we can enter into GOD's kingdom?

What did CHRIST say to Nicodemus?

When were you born again?

What is Baptism called in Scripture to tell you that? (Answer.—The washing of regeneration.)

Whom do you depend on for your livelihood in this world?

Who is the father of your soul? (Trust—obedience—correction.)

How does GOD correct us?

What has our SAVIOUR taught us to call GOD in our prayers?

Have all mankind a right to call Him our FATHER?

What do you mean by elect?

Have you that right?

We are also, then, children of GOD; without being children of GOD we have no right to pray and speak to GOD as “Our FATHER.” We have seen that by nature we were not His children,—we were children of Adam, and he fell. We know that, except we be born of water and the Spirit, as our LORD has declared, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. This is done then at Baptism, which is called by S. Paul and S. James (Tit. iii. 5; S. James i. 18), “the washing of regeneration.” Not that the washing would save us without the power of GOD, but it pleases Him to work by those means. He would restore the sight to the blind man, so He made clay and anointed his eyes, though He might have done it by a word, or without a word: so when He would regenerate us—He *might* have made us His children without Baptism,—but it *did* please Him to sanctify water to the washing away of sin. This He did when He chose to be baptized in it Himself, and the Spirit descended upon Him like a Dove.

What is an inheritor?

Have you a title to the kingdom of heaven?

When did you get it ?

What have you a title to by Baptism ?

Does it belong to your FATHER ?

Whom do you mean when you say your FATHER ?

How have you a title to it ?

Who gave you this title ? (Rom. viii. 17.)

‘If we really believed this, where should we place our treasures,—that is, our desires and wishes?—on earth, which we know is passing away, or at any rate, which we know we shall ourselves leave? or in the heaven which we are told is our inheritance? Which is better, to place them on earth, where at best the security is doubtful, or in heaven, where they will certainly be preserved? Is it not folly to leave your treasure in a place from which you must depart, and not to send it to that place where you expect to go? Place therefore your substance where your country is; much earthly treasure is destroyed by moth and rust, some is lost through thieves, but CHRIST brings forward another reason besides for laying up our treasure where our inheritance is: He says, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,”—as much as to say, even if you lose nothing of what you place on earth, though most likely you will, yet you will suffer no small loss by attaching your affections on things beneath, and making yourself a slave to them, and in falling from heaven and being able to think of no lofty thing. Of what use is this heaven by inheritance to one who places his treasure on earth?—he has nothing to look forward to in heaven; why should he look up to heaven if he has laid up there nothing for himself?

Are you quite sure if baptized of having the kingdom of heaven? (Heb. iv. 1.)

How can you lose or forfeit it? (1 Cor. i. 2, v. 11.)

What is a covenant?

If I make a promise to you, is that a covenant?

Or you to me?

If I hire a labourer, is that a covenant?

Why?

What do I promise?

What does he?

If I refuse to give him his wages, is he bound by his covenant?

What then if he refuse to do his work?

We will treat on this subject of promises more fully at another time, but in the meanwhile let us never forget the nature of an agreement between two parties; the party who does not keep his own promise has surely no right to call upon the other party to the covenant to keep his. God no doubt has promised us these three things that we have just now been speaking of, but let us see whether we did not at the same time promise something to God.

Did you ever promise any thing to God?

Who did for you?

When?

Why was it necessary the sponsors should promise?

Who is bound by this promise, they or you?

Are they bound to do any thing?

What did your godfathers and godmothers then for you?

Our first promise, then, is to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil; and this, of course, puts us in mind of our Lord's temptation, which, so far as it is possible for us to understand it, seems to have been of this kind. On this subject we will speak next Sunday,—in the meanwhile let us all remember that we have each of us made our promises to God, and, as we value our salvation, let us see that we keep them.

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## LECTURE II.

### ON THE CATECHISM.

WE finished last Sunday by explaining the meaning of the word covenant, and showing that it meant more than the word promise,—in fact, that it is a sort of double promise from two parties, either of whom has it in his power to break the covenant if the other do not himself keep his own part of it. I explained it by asking the children how I made a covenant with a labourer if I hired him for a certain piece of work, and they told



me that he promised work and I promised wages,—that if I gave him no wages he was not bound to give me work, and if he gave me no work I was not bound to give him wages. This illustration you will see at once was taken from our LORD's own parable of the householder hiring labourers for his vineyard. There is a point in this that we have not had time yet to consider, and that is, that the householder in our case supplies us his labourers with the means to do his work, as we see in the parable of the talents, where he gives them something to trade with before he asks for any return; but that we must consider by and by, when we come to treat of the grace of God. At present I want you to have a clear idea of the term Christian Covenant, and Christian resolution to keep it, so I shall call the catechumens up to question them on this point to-day. Do not imagine that the object which the Church had in view, at the revision in Charles's days, when the Rubric which I read to you last Sunday was approved, and this kind of catechising was commanded, was to instruct the children only,—at the same time there were other provisions made for them, there were many regulations about schools and schoolmasters, and there was a provision that children should be catechised between the services. This was intended for all the children in the parish.

Besides this, not only that you might be judges whether the ministers and schoolmasters performed their duty in this respect, but also for your own instruction, the Minister was directed to choose some of the children,—if you look at your Prayer Books, at the end of the Catechism, you will find “as many as he shall think convenient,” that is, as many as he shall think will be of use to *you* in his teaching.

You will do well, therefore, to follow me both with your Prayer Books and Bibles,—try whether you could answer the questions put; if you can, you will remember the doctrine all the better; if you cannot, listen to the answer, and you will have learnt a portion of your religion which you are required to know. It will be like catechising the whole congregation.

At your Baptism GOD made you three promises, what were they? (In three words—Forgiveness, Help, and Happiness.)

Did you make any promises on your part?

Give me them in three words. (Repentance, Faith, and Obedience.)

Give it in the words of the Catechism.

Was this promise made by yourself?

Does it bind yourself?

What have your sponsors to do with it?

I have been so particular about the covenants, because it is by means of them that we hold our title to salvation. CHRIST obtained for us the kingdom of heaven by His death, and gave it to us as an inheritance under certain conditions. It is necessary for us to know what these conditions are, how they are to be obtained, by what means they may be lost, how it is possible for us to renew them, and how we may best keep them when they have been renewed.

Perhaps this will serve to show why Baptism is so very necessary, why the Church should be so very particular that the right forms should be attended to even in times of haste and distress, and why, under very urgent circumstances, rather than allow the possibility of a child dying unbaptized, she allows even those who have received no commission to perform one of the holiest offices without incurring the sin of Korah or of Saul. CHRIST has obtained for us all an inheritance, and Baptism is the only title-deed by which that inheritance is made over to us. We do not take upon ourselves to say that none are saved except those who are rightly baptized, but none can claim God's promises for salvation unless they are admitted to them by the form which CHRIST pointed out for their admission, and by the people whom CHRIST has commissioned to admit them.

### *Questions.*

You will realize this the better if you think how you hold any earthly inheritance you may possess. You received them from your fathers or near relations, or perhaps friends, and you are very thankful to them for what they have left you; but how do you hold them?—what makes them yours? Is it not the possession of some

law form which you very likely do not quite understand, but which you know thus much about for certain, that the possession of that form makes you masters of that inheritance? Just so it is with the sprinkling of the water and the repeating of the words. This is the form by which we hold our heavenly inheritance. The person who is not baptized is like the person who knows his friend *meant* to leave him an inheritance, but who has not got the will. That our Heavenly FATHER can make up for this loss, and give us the inheritance without it, is most true; that He will do so if it is lost without fault of ours, is very likely, though we have no promise that He will; but if we are without it because we have cared nothing about it, and have neglected it, and thrown it away, it is not at all likely that He will. Remember Esau, how he threw away his birthright: *he* found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. Remember this, then: a child who is baptized has the title-deeds of his inheritance, and the child who is not baptized has not yet got them.

#### *Questions.*

You saw, from the children's answers, that though covenants mean promises between two parties, made by each of them, yet that God gives us our title on other persons' undertaking that we shall be content with our share of the promises when we come to understand them, and indeed in cases of Private Baptism God gives us His grace without any promise on our part. This is a pure act of free grace on God's part, in order that no one, for want of knowledge or understanding, should lose their hope of salvation. God has been peculiarly careful for children from the very first time when He made covenant with man,—long before the Gospel Dispensation, He commanded them to be taken into covenant not later than eight days old. You can easily see, that though it has pleased God to change the precise outward form by which the inheritance is conveyed, just as, some time ago, a law about wills prescribed a new form of words to be made use of, yet the intention is always the same, and Circumcision then and Baptism

now is the outward form which conveyed to children their heavenly inheritance.

*Questions.*

Will God forgive wilful and habitual sin after Baptism? That is not implied in the covenant certainly, which, as far as forgiveness goes, speaks only of the past, and this we are especially warned of in the Creed which speaks of one Baptism for the remission of sins. The truth is, that God has not bound Himself to do that by covenant; He will of His free mercy forgive us if we turn to Him; He has told us so, and given us many examples to show us how He does it, but we can claim no promise,—indeed, He has told us very plainly that there are states of mind into which we may bring ourselves by long and obstinate continuance in sin in which He will not give it. All that we can claim from Him, as a matter of promise, is grace to help us both in keeping us from sin, and showing us how to repent it; and this, if we have not quite quenched the HOLY SPIRIT, we shall have, provided we ask for it earnestly.

*Questions.*

The answers given to these latter questions will show you what is meant by Christian resolution. Resolution generally means saying “I will,” and keeping to it when you have said it; Christian resolution means, too, saying “I will,” but it is “I will, remembering that God’s help is one of the three things which God has promised to give me.” The Christian says, just as firmly as any one else, “Yes, verily, I will,” but he puts in the words, “by God’s help.” He is just as certain of doing it if he pleases, as if he knew that he was strong enough of himself, because, having faith in the baptismal promises of God, he knows that he will be made strong enough by the help of God. But he knows that he will not be made strong enough without constant prayer, and therefore he adds, first, thanks that God has placed him in a state in which he can get this help by asking for it,—and that not for his own merits, but through JESUS CHRIST his SAVIOUR,—and then, thinking that he is standing now, yet fearing lest he *may fall hereafter*,

he prays that God would *keep* giving him that grace which He promised, that he may continue in the same state all his life long.

I am afraid we shall hardly have time this Lent to go through the two promises that we have made to God,—faith and obedience,—and to examine into the two parts of the Catechism which teach these things sufficiently closely; perhaps this may be the less necessary just now, because our Wednesday and Friday lectures treat of at least one of these subjects, when they examine one by one the Ten Commandments. I want as much as possible to make the week-days the time for considering the points of our duty wherein we have failed, and the Sundays the time for examining the means of grace which God has placed in our power, because each of these Lent Sundays brings us one step nearer to the time when we hope to offer ourselves—our souls and bodies—as a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto God at the festival of the Resurrection.

Now, our means of grace are the different ordinances which are open to us as baptized Christians, and the principle of these ordinances for our future life are prayer and the Lord's Supper. To these two points, therefore, and particularly the preparation necessary to a faithful partaking of the Lord's Supper, we will for the remainder of the Lent Sundays direct our questions.

We will now go on with the service.

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### LECTURE III.

#### ON THE CREED.

I HAVE often told you that the whole of the Lent services, suggested by the Gospels, Epistles, Collects, and Special Lessons of the season, beginning with Septuagesima, when we are first called upon to note the difference between our own lives and that of our Great Ex-



ample, and ending with Easter Eve, when we pray, that being buried with Him in Baptism, by continually mortifying our corrupt affections, we may, as He did, make the grave the gate of our joyful resurrection—from first to last, every service tends to one point, and that one point is the blessed resurrection at the last day, when the faithful shall be received into full communion with GOD the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST. I have told you, too, that the Communion of that great Festival of Easter is, in a more especial sense, the type of that eternal Communion, and that our partaking of it is a sort of pledge or earnest that we have passed through the necessary preparations of Lent, that we have examined ourselves thoroughly on every part of our faith and duty, that we have prayed God to enlighten our minds while we were doing it, that we have worthily lamented the errors we have discovered, that we have seriously set to work to amend them, and that now, while we are to the best of our power performing one of the promises we made at Baptism, “repentance;” and seeking means to keep the other two promises, “faith” and “obedience,” we claim, on the warrant of God’s own truth, the performance of one of the promises *He* made to us, “grace”—seeking it where CHRIST bade us seek it—in His body and blood.

Remembering that God forgives us only repented and acknowledged sins, and viewing this whole season as a means to that end, you will see that I have hitherto followed out the Church’s teaching—that while in my morning sermons I have first called upon you to mortify your bodies—then not to put your trust in any thing that you do but in CHRIST only—then to expect confidently the defence of God—I have at the same time made the other services conduce to the same end. Thus, one Sunday afternoon we examined into the promises which God has made us, and thus saw what we have to trust to, and saw also, that these promises were Forgiveness, Grace, and Eternal Happiness—while the next Sunday we examined what *we* had, on our parts, promised to God—and saw that that was, Repentance,

Faith, and Obedience. And we have seen in the course of our catechising that the performance of these promises on God's part depends entirely on the sincere endeavour on our part to perform ours.

Our Weekday Lectures have all had the same object in view. One of our promises was obedience, and obedience consists in keeping God's Commandments. We have, therefore, hitherto examined one by one the four first Commandments, and asked ourselves searchingly and minutely how we have kept them ; and we are next week going to begin, in a like close and searching manner, the Commandments of the second table. We should hardly make our Lent preparation complete unless we examined our faith as well as our duty, and took the twelve articles of the Christian faith contained in the Creed, as well as the ten articles of Christian duty contained in the Commandments. We will, therefore, make it our subject of catechising for this and the next Sunday—and though we shall not have time to enter into it as fully as we enter into the Commandments, we must not forget that it is to the full as necessary for our salvation—that it must be taken in as broad a sense—that the questions we must ask our consciences upon it are full as searching—and that it is *our* faith, the Catholic faith, the promise which *we* have made, and which, when addressed to baptized Christians, is that which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

*Catechise on the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the Creed.*

You recollect that the Athanasian Creed finishes by saying that “this is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.” And as both the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds are nothing more than explanations of this Apostles' Creed, authorised by the Church, it may be said also of this Creed, part of which we have been considering, that this is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved. That is to say, not a man generally, for we know nothing about God's dealings with those who do not belong to His Church, but a churchman ;

unless a churchman believe these things faithfully *he* cannot be saved. And the reason of this is, that it is part of his covenant. GOD has been pleased to offer him salvation, provided he believe all the articles of the Christian faith. If he do not choose to believe them, he has no right to complain that GOD will not perform His part of the covenant; by not believing he has refused to perform his own part of the covenant, and GOD has told him quite plainly, that though he that believeth and is baptized will be saved, he that believeth not will be damned. GOD gives children His grace at once in Baptism, and takes them into covenant before they can keep any part of it themselves. That is just like a compassionate master seeing a family in great distress, and intending to give them work, paying a part of their wages beforehand, to relieve them from their present distress. But the Church is quite aware that the grace at Baptism is, as it were, lent or advanced, so she provides people to teach the children what GOD requires of them. And to be sure that these people believe rightly themselves, the first thing the Church does is to examine them, (I mean the sponsors themselves) to see whether they themselves believe all these articles of the Christian faith, which they are promising to teach. When a child is christened, the Church asks the sponsors, dost *thou* believe in GOD the FATHER Almighty? and so goes through this whole Creed. She does not ask this in the name of the child, but says to the sponsors, I want to know whether you are proper people yourselves to trust this child to. This Creed will be necessary to salvation. Now do you believe it fully yourselves? The question is, dost thou believe? not, dost thou in the name of this child?

It is a very common thing to say, Give people the Bible, and let them find out GOD's word from it. We quite forget that when the Apostles preached they did not give people the Bible. They taught them first what to believe and to do, and then gave them such portions of the Scripture as they had. It has been supposed that when S. Paul told Timothy to hold fast the form

of sound words which he had received from him, it was the Apostles' Creed that was spoken of; at any rate thus much is certain, the Apostles' Creed was the basis of Christian teaching long before what we call the New Testament was in existence.

Now that is the reason why in catechising to-day I have taken this Apostles' Creed, and not the Nicene or Athanasian; it is the very Creed which the sponsors promised to teach these children (and, indeed, every one of you too,) when they were baptized. We want to see how they have taught it, for it is a thing of the very last importance. A Christian, that is, one who is in covenant or communion with God, is one who believes all these articles of the Christian faith; he who does not believe every one of them is not a Christian, and the promises we have been speaking of the last two Sundays, do not belong to him. A church may add to these articles of faith, such other articles as are necessary to its government, and these articles may be good or bad, as the case may be. We may approve of these articles of government, or we may not approve, but while it holds by the articles of the Christian faith, in all their breadth and fulness, it is still a real branch of CHRIST's Church. So also in the case of a private individual; he may have his own fancies, but so long as he holds fast the articles of Christian faith pure and unmixed, he may excommunicate himself, divide himself from CHRIST, and put himself out of covenant if he please; but the Church does not excommunicate him.

He has promised to believe these articles of the Christian faith contained in the Creed. What he has promised that the Church calls upon him to perform; but nothing more. Of these articles we are not to suppose one of more value than another. As there is One "which is the great commandment of the law," so there is One "which is the great article of faith." We have promised to believe them all, and unless we do what we have promised, and believe them all, we are out of covenant. Nor does it signify whether they are easy to understand or difficult to understand; we are not called



upon to understand, but to believe; to believe them, because God, Whom we cannot understand, but Whom we know to be good and faithful, has revealed these things to us. We have considered to-day the first division about God the FATHER, that is easy and familiar to our comprehensions. But the second division, that about God the SON, is more difficult, and requires a greater exercise of faith. Very true, we may spend more time in considering it, but the one is as necessary to our salvation as the other, we must receive them both alike. Next Sunday we shall take into consideration about the HOLY GHOST, and the Church, and the Judgment. That is more difficult to understand than either of the other divisions, but I do not find that it is the less necessary to salvation on that account. It is part of the Christian's promise, it is part of that covenant through which he is saved; it is the Catholic faith, believed from the very foundation of the Church, always, everywhere, and by all, and therefore that which unless he keep whole and undefiled, without doubt, according to his LORD's own words, he shall perish everlastingly.

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## LECTURE IV.

### ON THE CREED.

THERE is one thing in the Apostles' Creed which ought not to escape our notice, and that is, the division of it into three subjects, as well as twelve articles. Each of these subjects is headed by the words, "I believe." Not but that this word applies to every portion of the Creed, and is supposed to be repeated at the head of every article, but that the Church wishes us to see that mankind is divided into three distinct classes in a religious point of view, according as they believe fully in one, two, or three Persons of the Blessed TRINITY.



It is hardly possible to conceive the case of men who do not believe in GOD the FATHER. Their altar may be to the unknown GOD—they may not know His attributes, nor understand anything of His nature, because those only know GOD to whom GOD has been pleased to reveal Himself. But to live without GOD in the world is not natural to man, and at no time, and in no place, has He left Himself without a witness. The first division of the Creed, then, comprehends all mankind.

*Question on "First, I believe in GOD the FATHER, Who made me and all the world."*

But among these there are a portion of men to whom it has been predestined from the beginning of the world, that CHRIST should be revealed. In course of time, He will, we doubt not, be known to the whole earth, but at present certain nations alone are chosen, and by GOD's own special choice others are kept back. Why this is so we do not know—that it is so we are sure, because we find it in the Bible. When S. Paul, for instance, essayed to go into Bithynia, the HOLY GHOST suffered him not, but sent him to a different nation. CHRIST redeemed all mankind; but He did not suffer Himself to be made known except to the elect people of GOD.

*Question on "Secondly, in GOD the SON, Who redeemed me and all mankind."*

And who are the elect people of GOD? Not all good people certainly. We will not take upon us to say that there are no good heathens, who have never known CHRIST, still less will we venture to say that all those who are elected to have CHRIST offered to them are necessarily good people. Common sense would tell us that, even if we forgot the parable of the good and bad fish, which were all enclosed in the net that represented the kingdom of heaven.

*Question on "Thirdly, in GOD the HOLY GHOST, Who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of GOD."*

The elect people of GOD are those who are chosen to be admitted into the Church. They are then sanctified—that is, separated for GOD's service by the HOLY GHOST

from the world who are not sanctified. The term elect is used in the same sense as that in which the Apostles use it at the opening of most of their epistles, and signifies the baptized.

But as this may be taken in a large and full sense, to describe the way in which grace is distributed to all mankind, so it may also be taken to describe the difference with which mankind receive it. Some merely confess a God, a superintending Providence, and know nothing or care nothing about the other two divisions of the Creed. Some have an historical belief that CHRIST died for them, and that their sins will be forgiven by means of His death, though they do not much understand how. They have some idea that some sort of grace is given somehow or other; but they have no great idea of any outward and visible means of receiving it. This is a very large class indeed—some belonging to it through wilfulness, but most through ignorance. A third class believes *all* the articles of the Christian faith—believes, indeed, the first and second divisions of it without which the third would be incomprehensible and useless; but it is not contented with believing in part, nor thinks anything sufficient for salvation short of the whole that our SAVIOUR has revealed—rests in peace under the rule of an Almighty FATHER—trusts for everlasting happiness in the atonement and sacrifice of the Blessed SON—but believes also in the HOLY GHOST—receives its sanctification in the Holy Catholic Church, through the means which that SPIRIT has sanctified for the purpose—is thankful for the four privileges granted to that Church—feels the Communion of Saints—acknowledges in Baptism the remission of sins—looks for the resurrection of the body—and hopes for life everlasting.

We will now catechise on the third division of the Creed: and let me beg your full attention to the subject, for it is a very common idea that a certain sort of religiousness, going under the general name of faith, is all that is required of us; whereas we have seen that our only title to heaven lies in God's promises, and that

those promises are made to those, and those only, who hold all the articles of the Christian faith.

*Catechise on the 3rd Division of the Creed.*

This, then, is the Christian's religion—the Articles of the Christian's faith—that which distinguishes him who is a follower of CHRIST from him who is a follower of his own will, and a follower of CHRIST only so far as the will of CHRIST accords with his own will.

We have hitherto treated these articles as so many points necessary to the salvation of a Christian; but there is another light, and a far more loving and affectionate light, in which we should accustom ourselves to regard them. And that is, not as so many duties which we are compelled to perform through fear of missing our reward, but as so many privileges which our heavenly FATHER has been graciously pleased to bestow upon us. We should regard it not as a duty that we *must* believe in GOD the FATHER, but as a happiness that we *have* a FATHER to watch over us. We should not say we are *obliged* to believe in GOD the SON, and in the atonement which He has made for us, but that we count it most unspeakable blessedness, that when we had no other escape from death, He, the GOD ALMIGHTY, laid down His life for us. Nor should we teach ourselves to say that we *cannot be saved* unless we believe in the HOLY GHOST, and receive the grace of that HOLY SPIRIT through the ordinances of the Church which He has appointed to be the keeper of it; it is true, we have no promise of being saved unless we do; but how much more Christianlike to burst out into a song of thankfulness that CHRIST has sent us a Comforter, that He has ordained us a Church, that He has appointed in it means of grace for those who could not help themselves, that He has given us one Baptism for remission of sins, that we could never have washed away, that He has revealed to us our future communion with our departed friends, promised us a resurrection of our bodies and life everlasting. In many churches the Creed is sung as an anthem of praise and thanksgiving to God, and it is a true Christian spirit to do so. The Creed is not a

cold declaration of the Christian faith, it is a joyful and a thankful acknowledgment of the Christian happiness.

As such may we all regard it, and there will be no fear that we forget or neglect any of the articles of the Christian faith, when we have brought ourselves to regard them as so many points of a Christian's privileges.

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## LECTURE V.

### ON PRAYER.

It may well be said that the whole of religion depends on our proper sense of these two truths, that we cannot help ourselves, and that there is One who will help us. If we thought we could help ourselves, there would be no need of prayer; unless God had revealed to us His willingness to hear, we should not know whom to pray to.

We find that two of the promises which we have made to God in our Baptism are, that we will believe all that He has revealed to us, and that we will do all that He has commanded us, and on those conditions He has promised us eternal happiness. When we are asked whether we will believe and do all that our sureties have promised for us, we make no hesitation about our own natural weakness, but we say boldly, Yea, verily, and by God's help, so I will, and I heartily thank my Heavenly FATHER for bringing me into this state of salvation. Now "state of salvation" means "state in which I can be saved." I cannot be saved unless I keep my promises, therefore state of salvation means a state in which I *can* believe all that I have to believe, and *can* do all that I have to do. This I know I cannot do by nature, but into this state in which we can do and believe this, we are firmly convinced God has brought us, and this state we call the Church. Into this Church or this state of salvation He has brought us, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Not only because He has made an



atonement for our past sins, which otherwise we could never ourselves have made up, but also because it is through Him that our prayers are answered, and that we receive the strength which enables us to keep these promises. Hitherto we have been examining the promises we have made to God, our faith and our obedience. We are now going to examine into God's part of the covenant, and to see how those who are willing to perform *their* part obtain the help, without which they cannot do any thing.

With respect to God's part of the covenant which relates to grace, God has made two conditions—first, that we should ask for it—and secondly, that we should be content to receive it in the way He chooses to send it.<sup>1</sup> Both these conditions are put in for our good. The first, that we should never allow ourselves to forget that only of His gift it cometh that His faithful people do Him true and laudable service. The second, that we may prove our faith and see whether we believe fully in the power of God, Who can make even the elements do His will, and Who therefore can send His grace to enable us to do it likewise, through means apparently so insufficient as those which He has appointed.

We are not able to think any thing of ourselves, any more than to do any thing of ourselves. And we are warned by the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, who put strange fire into their censers, that is to say, offered up unauthorised and rash prayers, how dangerous a thing it is to pray in an unauthorised manner, and how difficult it is to pray aright.

To help our infirmities and to show us how to pray, our SAVIOUR has given us a form of words so short, that every body can recollect them, yet so comprehensive as to take in all that we really want.

This is the subject which we will choose for to-day's catechising, though we shall not have time to treat of it as fully as its importance requires. So many children have asked me to be permitted to answer, both from the school and from among those who have left, that we

<sup>1</sup> S. John vi.



shall hardly have room for them here; it will be sufficient if a few only come here, and that the rest, that is to say, any who would like to answer, should stand up in their places and answer from thence.

*Catechise mostly from Sinclair on the Lord's Prayer.*

I have a few pieces of advice to give you about prayer. In the first place, let it be daily. There is nothing we are so apt to let slip out of our minds as the sense of our dependence upon God's *constant* care, and the moment that is out of our minds there is no religion. Every day and every hour little things occur, in all of which there is a right and a wrong. We cannot *ever* afford to let the idea of our duty to God slip out of our minds, nor our sense of the need we have of God's help. As sure as we forget to pray, so sure are we to begin to do what we like in little matters, instead of what we ought to do. And as soon as we do that, we shall begin first to make distinctions between little duties and great duties; and in the end to neglect them all.

The next piece of advice is this—necessary as private prayer may be, it is not to be compared with common or united prayer. There are several reasons why this must be the case, such as learning friendliness, and considerateness for one another, when we see ourselves all united as children of one FATHER in our FATHER's house, getting rid of our natural selfishness by seeing that we all want the same things, getting rid of our pride, by all alike acknowledging ourselves miserable sinners, encouraging and animating our devotions by seeing the devotions of others. These, and many others, will all be admitted as reasons by even worldly men; but I would have the faithful look a little deeper into the matter, and remember how much greater a privilege it is, to have "JESUS CHRIST in the midst of us," than simply "to be rewarded openly." That is the real difference between common prayer and private prayer, and that is at once the answer to those who say they may as well say their prayers at home; if your private prayers *are* sincere they will be rewarded, that is answered; but if you come to Church you will meet CHRIST. There is

just the same difference too between common prayer and the Holy Communion; if you go to Church to pray you will meet CHRIST there, but if you receive the Holy Communion you receive Him within you. The great fault in people who are indifferent about coming to Church, or indifferent about the Holy Communion, is want of faith. CHRIST certainly has said, "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." And from the very Apostles' time the Church has always interpreted that to signify coming together in the LORD's house. And CHRIST has said also, "whoso eateth My flesh dwelleth in Me and I in him;" but people are faithless, people do not believe His words, and therefore they come to Church when it suits their convenience, and many do not come to the Communion at all.

The third piece of advice is, learn to use for your private prayers, as well as your public, THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH. If you will study your Prayer Books, you will find that there is no one single thing that you can want for which you may not find a petition in the Prayer Book, put in far better language than any you can make.

I am very particular, as you know, in teaching you all your collects, and sometimes I have made you learn the Gospels with them,—my reason is this: I want you to make your own family prayers, and to have these in your minds to make them by, and to have in your minds also examples which suggest particular prayers on particular occasions. No one need be at a loss for a family prayer book who can say the LORD's Prayer and the Creed, and who knows where to turn to the Collects and the Psalms, for this is the very best you can have. You will be pretty nearly sure to remember a gospel for everything you want, and a collect belonging to that gospel. What do you suppose I made you read or chant the psalms for every day of your lives at school, except that you should remember what David prayed for, and what he thanked God for, and *how* he did both the one and the other?

The very best family prayer books, as they are called, are but bad jumbles of the Church prayers. Learn to do as the Church has done,—to ask for each particular thing that you want, separately, remembering, if you can, some instance where God has granted that particular thing. Ask it in CHRIST's Name. If you want anything else, make another prayer for it, also in CHRIST's Name, and then you will remember what you have prayed for. It is for this reason that it has become so universal a thing to make children learn the collects; we keep up the custom after we forget the reason. The collects contain nearly everything we can ask for, and he who has these well in his head, and knows what they mean, will have but little use for a family prayer book.

My last piece of advice is, learn to pray for one another,—learn to pray for your friends,—and that not only because “the prayer of a righteous man availeth much,” but because it strengthens your own faith, or rather because failing to do so weakens your faith. Do you really believe that CHRIST is now in the midst of us, and listening to us?—do you really think He can grant what you want for yourselves?—then He must be as ready to grant what you ask for others, particularly as He has told you to pray for them. You want the hearts of some of your relations turned to God, and your own words have no effect on them,—have you ever asked God to turn them? and if you have not, why have you not, except that you did not believe that He could or would listen to you? You have bad children,—cannot God make them better? but have you ever prayed for them? You have sick friends,—cannot God provide for them? but have you ever asked Him to do so? and, if you have not, what is the reason? I am afraid there can be but one reason given,—want of faith. You think that daily prayer in the Church is of little use, because the congregation of the faithful is but small,—why do you think so? want of faith again. You think that prayers are a matter of instruction and profit only to those who hear them; you do not think that the prayer of the two or three who are gathered together can profit

you who stay away;—why not? God can soften your hearts and make you see the necessity of more frequent coming to Him; we believe that He is in the midst of us when we pray, and we ask Him to do so: why are you to suppose He will not hear us?—we pray for the sick and the distressed every day, especially and by name, —cannot God hear that? and do you suppose He will not answer our prayers as is best for us and them? If you believe that, there is one use of daily prayer; if you do not believe it, where is your faith? Depend upon it, faith does not mean believing that there is such a Person as CHRIST, but believing that CHRIST will do what He has promised to do.

This, then, is one great use of all prayer,—it makes our faith more clear, we learn to have a better idea of God's special Providence, and to look on Him as a Father Who is able and willing to help us. Prayer is a test of our faith; you will always see it so. A man who comes regularly to Church, in nine cases out of ten, is a good man; a man who never comes to Church is almost always a bad one. There is but one reason for all this,—it is a case of faith or want of faith.

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## LECTURE VI.

### ON THE SACRAMENTS.

WE have arrived now at the last division of the Catechism,—the means by which grace is bestowed on us. The most remarkable point in this is, that from the very beginning of covenant with mankind, God has always appointed some outward means of signifying His grace,—He has always employed the agency of man, and often also of elements,—and never has any manifestation of Himself or of His special grace been vouchsafed to man without some such intermediate cause. It is either the speaking of Moses or the speaking of Joshua which



causes the sea to flow back and the sun to stand still, or else it is the stroke upon the rock or the casting up of ashes that brings the water or the darkness. It is as if the ALMIGHTY wished to try our faith, and to see whether in the lump of figs, or the anointing of clay, or the handkerchiefs taken from the bodies of the Apostles, the hand of the Almighty God could be discerned by the eye of faith. Undoubtedly the cures were performed by means of these insufficient things,—the means of grace were received through the figs, the clay, and the handkerchiefs; had not those who received them possessed so much faith as this, they never would have been cured. The manner in which they showed their faith was believing that the great God Who made these things at first, and endowed them with their ordinary qualities, could, if He pleased, endow these same things with any other qualities, and make them instrumental to the carrying of His grace.

In just the same way has He dealt with us. He vouchsafes to us grace sufficient to place us in a state of salvation, and afterwards, notwithstanding our corrupt nature, to keep us in it, and has endowed water administered by one whom He has commissioned for the purpose, as the means of the first, and bread and wine similarly administered as the means of the second. The water and the bread and wine without the Priest,<sup>1</sup> would be of no avail to any such purpose; nor would the Priest without the consecrated elements; and that not because God *could* not have appointed these or any other means for the conveying of His grace, but because He *did* not. These means profit the receivers through faith; they believe that by the one, God, for CHRIST's sake, grants

<sup>1</sup> Whether the Church had authority to sanction lay Baptism in extreme cases, or whether she had not, the command having been given to the Apostles and their successors to the end of the world, and to none others that we know of, is a point on which I am incompetent to argue. I receive the tradition of the Church, and am content with it. Neither will I argue the point about heretical or schismatical Baptism, where there is no extreme case, or any reason for it whatever, further than to observe, that the validity of such Baptism rests on Tradition alone, and is at the very best extremely doubtful.



remission; they believe that by the other, God, at CHRIST's intercession, sends help and strength. And according to their faith, so it is to them. They receive that which the faithless partaker, and he who does not partake at all, does not receive. And by the outward means of these elements received inwardly through faith, they first have their sins forgiven and remitted, and are afterwards renewed in what points soever they have failed; and are thus again set forward in their Christian course.

*Catechise mostly from Bevan.*

We have now finished our preparations for the great Communion of Easter, as taken from the Catechism; but before we finally close the subject, we will review shortly the course we have followed, and the reason why one principal preparation for this festival ought to be a close examination of us all, communicants, I mean, as well as catechumens, in this portion of our Prayer Book. Easter, you know, signifies the end and object of our whole lives—a communion with God at our resurrection. The Catechism describes the road we must follow to attain this. It is, as it were, the handbook of our road through life, where everything that we ought to do, and every advantage of which we can avail ourselves, is set forth in the briefest and most distinct manner possible.

In the first division we had the covenants—our agreement with God, and the terms, as it were, on which He permits us to travel this road. These we paid especial attention to, and devoted two Sundays to examining them, because it is from these covenants alone that there is any difference between the Christian and the heathen. The one is in a state of covenant, the other depends upon the uncovenanted mercies of God. We saw that this state of covenant, called in the Catechism “a state of salvation,” consists in our having made certain promises to God, and God having made certain promises to us—that we are admitted into it by a certain prescribed ceremony which we call Baptism, and that we continue in it only so long as we keep our share of the covenants—that is to say, faith and obedience; or re-

penitance if ever that faith and obedience should have failed.

The second division explained what our faith is—that it is not what some foolishly suppose, a mere belief that JESUS CHRIST is a heavenly Personage, Who died that we should not be punished, but a determination to receive whatever that heavenly Personage has delivered to us, whether command, or promise, or means of grace, implicitly, and as we should receive them from an Almighty God—not asking for reasons and causes, and “how can these things be?” but considering it quite a sufficient reason that God has promised, or commanded, or given in this particular way, and that He Who promised is faithful.

The third division followed naturally from this, and treated of our obedience. But on this head we have little to say now, because we have enlarged so much upon it on the Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent.<sup>1</sup> We will merely remark that in these two divisions of the Catechism we have reviewed the two promises which we made to God on being taken into covenant with Him—Faith and Obedience—and in the next two have examined the value of a promise made by Him—Grace—that is to say, favour, a word signifying either forgiveness or assistance, according to our necessities, that is, according as we approach Him as guilty creatures, or as frail creatures, as those who have sinned, or as those who are liable to sin.

The fourth division, as we saw last Sunday, treats of the means of obtaining the grace of God, which must be asked for before God will give it to us, and of the permission which He has granted us to address Him as our Father, Whose children we were made by our adoption in Baptism.

The last division, which we have considered to-day, treats of the principal means by which God conveys to us the grace we have asked for, and which He has promised to give us. I say the principal means, for God

<sup>1</sup> See questions for self-examination from the Commandments, pages 94—139.

has other means which He sometimes employs, some of which, indeed, have been called sacraments—such as His Word, the ordinance of preaching, the ordinance of Confirmation, repentance and absolution, and many others. These we have passed over for want of time ; but what we have considered more particularly are those which the Church pronounces “generally necessary,” that is, necessary to salvation in all Christians, and which, for this reason, are distinguished above all other means of grace, and are called especially the two Sacraments. They are said to be generally necessary to salvation—that is to say, necessary to the salvation of all Christians, because they are the two things which, if we do not possess, we shall not be saved ; and these Sacraments are the only means whereby God conveys these two things. One is regeneration, or a new nature which is conveyed by Baptism, for manifestly our old nature which was condemned in Adam is unfit for the kingdom of heaven ; the other is renewal, or the building up again of that which has been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by our own carnal will and frailness. This is done from time to time by partaking of the nature of CHRIST, which, according to His Word, is what we do in the LORD’s Supper. And thus we are kept in that state of salvation in which we have been placed by Baptism, and in which we are taught in the Catechism to pray that we may be continued unto our life’s end.

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#### NOTE.

The modern heresy, that the Sacrament of the LORD’s Supper is merely a commemoration and remembrance of the Great Sacrifice of our LORD, is generally attributed to Calvin, but most unjustly. The idea arose probably from the notion, very commonly entertained, that the alterations in the Second Book of Edward VI. were made at Calvin’s suggestion, through the instrumentality of Bucer.

However this may be, the fact is, Calvin’s sentiments on this great

doctrine are, in many respects, precisely those held by the Primitive Church and by the Church of England to this day. Calvin was not a man to leave any doubt about his real sentiments on any subject whatever; and on this subject in particular he was likely to be precise. Dupin remarks of him that "he useth *very positive words* to express the presence of the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST."

Calvin's sentiments on the subject are, that JESUS CHRIST is united to us in this Sacrament, not by fancy and imagination, nor by thought, or a bare apprehension of the mind, but really and indeed by a true and substantial union;—that the manner of our receiving CHRIST's Body is very different from the other manner of receiving Him by faith;—that this Mystery is incomprehensible, and contains in it a miracle which exceeds the bounds and capacity of the mind of man, and which is the work of the Almighty GOD much above the course of nature;—that there is a Divine and supernatural *change* in it, which surpasses our sensible knowledge:—that the Flesh and Blood of JESUS CHRIST are truly given to the *unworthy* as well as to the faithful and elect, though they are not received with benefit unless it be by the faithful only.

These are very remarkable expressions, and we find them confirmed where we should least expect to find a confirmation of them,—in the writings of Zuingli. He would never admit that he regarded the Eucharist as mere bread and wine. "If," said he, "bread and wine, sanctified by the Grace of GOD, are distributed, is not the whole Body of CHRIST, as it were, *sensibly* given to His followers? The unworthy sin against the *Body and Blood of CHRIST*."

The real author of this heresy, now so prevalent, was a man of very little eminence among the Reformers, Andreas Bodenstein Carolostadt, of whom Melancthon writes thus: "He was a man of savage disposition, and of no genius or learning, or even common sense, who was so far from having any marks of being influenced by the HOLY SPIRIT, that I could never observe him to practise even the ordinary duties of humanity."

It was Carolostadt, not Calvin, who wrote that "the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST is not in the Sacrament, which is only a commemoration of the Body and Blood of CHRIST given and shed for us," and that "these words, 'This is My Body given for you,' 'This is My Blood shed for you,' have no relation to the bread and wine, but to the Body of JESUS then present and visible."

No sooner was this sentiment uttered, than it was repudiated by his brother Reformers. Luther's observations are very remarkable, as showing the characteristic honesty and straightforwardness of the man.

"I neither can nor will deny," he said, "that if Carolostadt, or any one else, could have persuaded me, during the last five years, that in the Sacrament there is nothing but mere bread and wine, he would have conferred on me a great obligation. I have examined this matter with the utmost anxiety, and with persevering diligence. I have stretched every nerve with a view to unravel this mystery, for I most clearly saw that this new tenet would give me great advantages in my contests with the Papacy. Moreover, I have had correspondence on this subject with two persons much more acute than Carolostadt, and not at all disposed to twist words from their natural meaning. But the text in the Gospel is so strong and unequivocal, that I have found myself compelled to

submit to its decision. Its force can be eluded in no way whatever, much less by the fictitious glosses of a giddy brain." (*Eccl. Biog.*)

That a heresy propounded by such a man as Carolostadt, based on so manifest a perversion of the plain words of Scripture, and repudiated so directly by every Reformer of eminence, should have held its ground, is due entirely to its rationalistic tendencies. If any sect of Englishmen have borrowed it from Geneva, it is from Unitarian Geneva, not Calvin's Geneva, that they have taken it. If they have received it from any of Cranmer's foreign importations, it is certainly not from Bucer, nor from Peter Martyr, but from John Alasco and the Polish school of incipient Socinianism. They have seen, as Luther saw, the advantage which such an interpretation would give them in a contest with Rome, but they had not Luther's honesty to reject that, which neither the traditions of the Church, nor the plain, literal, and grammatical sense of the Scriptures would warrant them in holding.



## S E R M O N S.

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THE design of the five following sermons is to assist both catechist and catechumen in their respective labours when there are no catechetical lectures. The work is here reversed: in the case of the catechetical lecture the subject must be given out on the preceding Sunday, and during the week the catechists are preparing their respective charges to answer to those questions which, on the following Sunday, they may expect to have put to them in church.

In this case the sermon itself is the announcement of the subject for the succeeding week, and at the same time an explanation of it. Sermons like these must be framed on the catechetical books which the Parson has selected for the use of the catechists, these he will do well to assemble after the sermon, and to point out to them how such and such points which he has touched upon are borne out in the different books with which he has supplied them, pointing out in what particular this or that book excels, and which of them ought to be used to explain this or that topic.

There are an immense number of these books, and every one will choose his own; those which I have used at one time or other are Bather's, Bevan's, and Sinclair's catechisms; Blunt on "Confirmation," (Masters;) Ridley on "Confirmation," the second part, (Hughes;) Watson's "Pastor preparing his Flock for Confirmation," (Rivington;) Gresley's "Use of Confirmation," (Masters;) and "Dialogues on Confirmation," (Masters.)

## I.

### THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

“ Now therefore hearken unto Me, O ye children : for blessed are all they that keep My ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.”—Prov. viii. 32, 33.

THE public Baptism of children is now so common an occurrence in this church, and the whole service must be so perfectly familiar to the minds of all, that it will not be necessary for me to go so much into the details of the service as I otherwise must have done, in order to show you that, in the education of a Christian child, Baptism is the beginning, the Church Catechism the model of teaching, Confirmation the arming the Lord's soldier for his warfare, and the Lord's Supper the nourishment or support during the fight. This is the light in which these four ordinances ought to be viewed ; not as so many distinct institutions, some of which may be sought and some neglected, but as so many necessary parts,—not perhaps all indispensably necessary to salvation, for that in its strict sense can be said of the sacraments only, but all indispensably necessary in order that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, and able in any way to understand and appreciate the wonderful and mysterious blessings of the sacraments themselves. For this reason it is that I have had a page printed recording the four most remarkable events of a Christian's life. The date of his birth into the world a child of wrath,—the date of his new birth, or adoption by God in Baptism,—the date of his taking God's armour, in consequence of that adoption, in Con-

firmation,—and the first time that he partakes of that True Bread that came down from heaven, whereby, according to the words of His SAVIOUR, he is in CHRIST, and CHRIST in him. This page I have pasted into many of your Prayer Books, and I will paste it into all of them, in order that you may all be constantly reminded that no man has attained his spiritual growth, no man can be other than a very babe in grace, until he has passed from the first of these necessary steps up to the last.<sup>1</sup>

At present, however, we are more concerned with the link that connects the sacrament of Baptism with the ordinance of Confirmation.

You may remember that, at the end of the service for Baptism, the Priest exhorts the sponsors that it is “their parts and duties to see that the child be taught the Creed, the LORD’S Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul’s health ;” and accordingly, when the child himself comes to be old enough to see the value of his privileges, the very first thing that He is reminded of in Confirmation is, that “none may be confirmed except such as can say the Creed, the LORD’S Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and can also answer such questions as in the Short Catechism are contained.”

Now, one would have thought, at first sight, that a competent knowledge of God’s own book, the Bible, were a necessary qualification ; and, to those who can read and understand it, it is a necessary qualification ; but to read the whole of the Bible is a thing which all have not done, and many cannot do ; to understand and arrange its different parts, so as to make out with confidence all that God requires us to believe and to do, is what very few indeed could undertake. To require that would be in most cases requiring an impossibility. The Church, therefore, recommends the reading of the Bible, and orders it to be read all through every year ; though a knowledge of it is not indispensable, no knowledge of God that we can acquire is unnecessary ; in this, as in other things, God requires our very best,—for JESUS

<sup>1</sup> See form at the end of this Sermon.

CHRIST's sake He is satisfied with that, imperfect as it is, but in no case can we expect Him to be satisfied with less. But these things which the Church mentions are the very least that a man can know in order to call himself a Christian, and she requires it of all alike, because to the educated the Catechism is the very best Scripture guide, teaching him to arrange and classify the doctrines of his Bible, while to the uneducated it is a short yet complete summary of his faith, his privileges, his expectations, and his duty towards God and man. In fact, it is the whole scheme of religion brought into one view, and, as such, must be diligently studied by all who make that solemn promise to God before His Bishop, lest in their very ignorance they take His name in vain, and incur to themselves damnation. This is all that is necessary to salvation; to those who have time and opportunity, a knowledge of God's dealings with mankind, as shown forth in the Bible, is also necessary, and the history and development of His Church, from the days of the Apostles to our own, is also necessary, and a knowledge of its constitution and laws is also necessary, while to those who are unable to pursue these studies they are not necessary; the only thing that is required of such as these is that they should not give rash opinions about what they do not understand, but that they should receive with a humble and contented mind the Faith once delivered to the saints, and preserved for their use by that Church which is not only a witness, but a "keeper of Holy Writ."

Some people have called the Catechism a difficult thing to understand. To understand the dealings of an Infinite God, no doubt requires diligence and attention from us. No one will understand that, or anything else, who does not wish to understand it; but those who do wish, and who do try their best, will not find it so very difficult a task, however ignorant they may be.

In order that we may have a distinct view of the Christian scheme of salvation as set forth in the Catechism, it will be expedient to divide the Catechism itself into five heads. In the first are set forth the covenants be-

tween God on the one part and ourselves on the other, and in this we shall find that our part of that covenant is to believe and to obey. This leads us to the second and third heads, in the first of which, the Creed and the explanatory questions that follow it, we learn what to believe; in the second, the Commandments, and our SAVIOUR's own division of them, viz., our duty towards God and our duty towards our neighbour, we learn what to obey. Then comes the natural question,—We have promised on our parts to believe and to obey, can we do what we have promised? Certainly not, without help from God; and this leads us to the fourth head, Prayer, as explained by the LORD's Prayer and the question that follows it. Lastly, what are the ordinary channels of God's grace, and the means whereby we are joined and kept in the holy fellowship with CHRIST, wherein we hope to be saved? This brings us to the fifth and last head—the blessed Sacraments. I will sum up the five heads in a few words,—it is briefly this: 1, our Promises; 2, our Faith; 3, our Duty; 4, our privilege of Prayer; 5, our means of Grace.

On the history of the Catechism much need not be said. The custom of public catechising is as old as the time of the Apostles, and probably much older, for we remember how our SAVIOUR was employed in the temple with the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions—that is, catechising them and being catechised; but this had gradually fallen into disuse, and it is remarkable that the dominion of Popery increased as the custom of catechetical teaching was neglected. Our present Catechism is but of modern date, compared with the greater part of the Prayer Book; the four first heads were drawn up by Cranmer and Ridley, about 300 years ago, were accepted by convocation, received by Parliament, and were added with the King's consent to the Confirmation service; this was done for the reason I have before given,—lest those who went to be confirmed should in their ignorance take God's name in vain. The fifth head was drawn up by Bishop Overal, at the command of James I., about fifty years afterwards; it



was taken mostly from an early letter of Ridley to Cranmer, which had been preserved, and the whole Catechism was then disjointed from the Confirmation service, and placed in the position it now occupies in the Prayer Book.

We will now examine these five heads more in detail; but throughout the whole of this course of lectures you must never forget that the particular head on which we may happen to be treating is but a part of the whole, and that the Christian scheme of salvation is incomplete unless we consider the whole five as connected together.

Under the first head we must consider,—1. Man's original state; 2. Man's fallen state; 3. The Christian Covenant for his recovery and salvation;—and this covenant we must consider in two lights: 1st, its privileges, viz., to be made members of CHRIST, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven,—or, in other words, forgiveness of past sins, present grace, and future glory: and, 2nd, its duties, viz., Repentance, Faith, Obedience.

#### I. THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

GOD, we are told, created man in His own image, after His own likeness. Now our SAVIOUR says that God is a Spirit. And in another place He says, “a Spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have.” It is evident then that the likeness between man and his Creator lay in the soul or spirit, which, after God, was created pure, holy, just, and good; or as S. Paul expresses it, “created in righteousness and true holiness.” While man was in this state God placed him in a pleasant abode, and made a covenant with him. This was the Covenant of Works. That you may understand these things the better, let us here pause to consider what a covenant is—a covenant is an agreement between two parties, both of whom make promises; consequently, if either side break those promises, the covenant is at an end; for instance, if I hire a man to do a piece of work, I make a covenant with him. That is to say, I promise him money, and he promises me work. Now it is clear enough that if I give him no money I have no right to claim his work, even though he promised it to me. Nor, on the other hand, can he claim my promise, the

money, unless he performs his, the work. This was exactly the case with our first parents in Paradise. God and they were parties to a covenant, God promised them happiness and immortality, they promised to God obedience generally, and particularly obedience with respect to the Tree of Knowledge. The result is well known. Our first parents broke their promises, and in consequence forfeited God's promise, and the covenant of works came to an end.

## II. MAN'S FALLEN STATE.

We have next to consider man in his fallen state; he had now, under the terms of the covenant, forfeited all right by promise to eternal happiness; but beyond that he had contracted such a blindness in the understanding, such a disorder in the will and affections as all his posterity must feel, for the Scriptures tell us that Adam begat a son not in the likeness in which *he was created*, that is to say, not in God's likeness, but in *his own* likeness, with such a depraved nature as his was now become. And this was but natural and inevitable; in common life, when a father squanders his fortune, his children become poor. When a father forfeits his hereditary honours his children lose theirs; they suffer for their father's fault. And was not this precisely the case with our first parents? had they not squandered their all to gratify their present wishes? had they not forfeited the honours to which God had created them? How then could it be otherwise? Adam begat a son in his own likeness; in the body subject to sickness, pain, and death; in the soul to grief, shame, remorse, and sin.

Now this being begotten after Adam's likeness, is what we call Original or Birth Sin; it may be defined as the habit or temper of mind, which renders sin pleasant to us, and gives strength to temptations; it is this which leads a man into actual sin, and actual sin, when frequently indulged in, becomes confirmed and habitual sin. It is easy to distinguish these different kinds of sin, by giving an example or two. To tell a lie is actual sin; to be inclined to tell lies, whether you tell them or no, is original sin; to steal is actual sin; to wish to take your

neighbour's property, though you do not take it, is original sin. Again, to tell a lie once, or to steal once, is actual sin; to tell lies often, to steal often, is habitual sin; habit is strengthened by repeated acts; *i.e.*, habitual sin is original sin, encouraged by actual sin. The oftener a man tells lies, the more he is inclined to tell them. The oftener a man steals, the more he is inclined to steal. That is, he becomes a confirmed liar or a confirmed thief. What we should draw from this is, that there is in man a something more than the mere following of Adam, and imitating him in his actual sin. There is a propensity or inclination to sin, which we derive from the circumstance of being begotten by him, at the time when he was deprived of God's protection. We therefore have an evil in our nature, which, when he committed his sin, he had not, but which he acquired by committing it. "Man," says the Ninth Article of the Church, "is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil."

This part of the subject admits of logical proof. To imagine that God could take a pleasure in the commission of sin, or could wish to commit sin, would be not only blasphemous, but absurd. And if man were still in the likeness of God, it would be equally absurd to imagine that he could feel pleasure in sinning. Yet we feel that we all have a desire to sin, and that the only reason why we are restrained, is a sense of duty. Therefore we are not like God; but as we once were like God, our nature must have become corrupted between that-time and this.

It was very necessary that we should have a clear notion of this before we attempt to understand the Catechism. The catechism explains the means which God in CHRIST has vouchsafed, whereby we are freed from the bondage of original sin; by the intercession of CHRIST, God does pardon actual sin, on our repentance; by the operation of the HOLY GHOST, God does sometimes, though rarely, root out habitual sin; but the grand victory of CHRIST, whereby He led captivity captive, and brought gifts to men, was over original sin; *i.e.*, incli-

nation to sin; He created us afresh in His Own image, "as many as were baptized into CHRIST, PUT ON CHRIST." He took the heavy yoke of sin from off our necks, and this, not by destroying original sin, for we still feel, and must feel, a "law in our members warring against the law of our mind;" but by giving us a heavenly grace whereby we may effectually withstand it. Had CHRIST not died for us, we could not have withstood this desire of sinning. As CHRIST has died for us we can, and this is what is meant by "leading captivity captive;" *i.e.*, subduing that which subdued us.

This is what we call the Covenant of Grace; but of this we will speak more at large in the next lecture, at present let us see the consolation it afforded to Adam in his fallen state, for even to him was promised that (in consideration of a Redeemer, one of the seed of the woman, who should make full satisfaction to the Divine justice for the transgression, and who should bruise the head, that is, break the power of that serpent the devil,) he should be forgiven. The fathers, that is to say, the Patriarchs of the Old Testament, did not look for transitory promises. The promise was the same to them as it is to us. CHRIST died for them as He did for us. The only difference in that particular is, they hoped it, we know it.

Before we come to speak more particularly of the covenant of grace, it may be as well to state shortly, in the words of Bishop Wilson, the means whereby this new covenant was effected, and the sacrifice which it required.

We have reason to believe that it was more fully explained to Adam and Eve, than is set down in the short account given by Moses, and more after the manner in which it is explained to us in the Gospel. That on condition of their sincere repentance and sincere obedience afterwards, they should be restored to the favour of God, and, after death, to that life and happiness, which in their state of innocence, was promised to them without tasting death; but this privilege they had forfeited by their disobedience.

And when we consider that our first parents, now become sinners, stood in need of an atonement, without

which, while under the displeasure of God, their very lives must be a burden,—and it being decreed by God, as it afterwards appeared, that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin,—that is, without the death of the sinner, or some one in his stead,—we do therefore conclude that at this time God did appoint sacrifices, or sin-offerings, for the purpose of making an atonement for the soul, and thus foreshowing the sacrifice of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as we commemorate it, now that it has taken place, by the LORD's Supper.

And this appears by what follows in the next chapter of Genesis, where we find Abel by faith (that is, believing and depending upon this ordinance of God for the remission of sins until the promised Redeemer should come) offering a sacrifice which was acceptable to God,—that is, a sin-offering,—which his brother not doing, was rejected. The sin of Cain was precisely the same as the sin of those who neglect the LORD's Supper, and yet worship Him in some fashion of their own. Cain worshipped God, for we find he offered of the first-fruits of the ground, but he did not worship God by the typical sacrifice of the death of CHRIST,—i.e., the shedding of blood, as God pointed out,—therefore his worship, such as it was, was refused. I think from this rejection of Cain, through his offering up his own sacrifices, and not those of the LORD's appointment, we have great reason to fear lest those who are content to worship God now after their own fashion, and not in the Sacrament given us by the LORD, will be rejected also.

But here we must take particular notice that these sacrifices, though called sin-offerings, could not in themselves take away sin, any more than the LORD's Supper can take away sin. They were the outward visible sign, and they took away sin only through obedience to the ordinance of God, and through faith in the promised seed.

They were indeed very instructive and proper to lead sinners to repentance, when they saw that their sins could not be forgiven but by the death of an innocent creature, bleeding and dying before their eyes, to make an atonement for sin; for it pleased God then, as now, to make the means which He chose for conveying His



grace to the penitent sinner,—the means of his instruction also. The means of grace in the Old Covenant typified the death of CHRIST only; the means of grace in the New Covenant typify not only the breaking of CHRIST's Body and the pouring out of His Blood, but the strength also which we receive thereby.

And as all good men, before the coming of CHRIST, did most religiously keep up the remembrance of the promised seed, and obtained pardon of their sins and acceptance upon offering sacrifices through faith in a Redeemer which was to come,—so all Christians, now that He is come, are obliged, as they hope for pardon and favour from God, to keep up the remembrance of God's great mercy in sending us a Redeemer, by using the appointed means to show the LORD's death till He comes.

Before the Covenant of Grace was given to man, he had been already tried in all conditions: first in a state of innocence, then under the government of his own reason, and lastly, under the law of Moses,—that is to say, instruction without special help of the HOLY GHOST; and in all these he had failed, and it was not until they had failed that God sent His beloved SON to take our nature upon Him. This was the promised seed,—promised to Adam as He that should break the serpent's head,—promised to Abraham as He in Whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed,—promised to the people of Israel as the Lawgiver like unto Moses,—promised to David as He Whose kingdom should have no end. And, indeed, it was with these promises that God supported the spirits of all who feared Him until the fulness of time for His appearance should come.

And now that He is come, He has appeared in all those characters typified and predicted. First, He showed, by His own example recorded in the Gospel, how men ought to live so as to please God; and then, the law of nature as well as the law of Moses having through sin been much obscured and perverted, He explained them, and gave us such other laws and rules as were necessary to fit us for happiness.

And because, in the decrees of God, without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin, He clothed Him-

self with our flesh, that as man He might suffer what our sins had deserved, and, as God, might make suitable satisfaction to Divine justice, offering Himself a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. By this sacrifice He led captivity captive,—that is, He overcame the power which was possessed by original sin to lead us, whether we would or no, into the commission of actual sin; and He obtained gifts for men,—that is, He obtained for them a new covenant, or agreement with God, called the Covenant of Grace.

The nature of the covenant so obtained, and the reason why it is called the Covenant of Grace, shall be the subject of the next lecture.

*Form of the page referred to at page 310.*

THE  
Book of Common Prayer  
THE  
INTERPRETER OF THE WORD OF GOD.

THIS Book is full of precious store,  
 Pearls of great price are here ;  
 Read it, and you will love it more  
 Each day, each month, each year.  
 Think not because it gives no heat  
 To hearts grown cold and dead,  
 It cannot guide the wanderer's feet,  
 Nor smooth the Christian's bed.  
 O yes, 'twill teach the infant tongue  
 To sing glad songs of praise ;  
 'Twill teach the careless and the young  
 To find out wisdom's ways ;  
 'Twill be a help to mothers mild,  
 To fathers kind and true ;  
 'Twill help each wayward, erring child,—  
 Therefore 'tis fit for you.

I,  
Being by nature born in sin the \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. \_\_\_\_\_ was by Baptism  
made a child of grace on the \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. \_\_\_\_\_ and having been  
Confirmed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_ A.D. \_\_\_\_\_ received the Holy Communion  
for the first time on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_ A.D. \_\_\_\_\_

## II.

### THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

“Now therefore hearken unto Me, O ye children : for blessed are all they that keep My ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.”—Prov. viii. 32, 33.

HAVING already considered, the nature and meaning of the word covenant ; the original state of man ; the covenant of works ; the breach of it ; the fallen state of man ; the meaning of original sin ; and the means whereby a fresh covenant was obtained for us ; we have now to examine the conditions and privileges of that covenant, which, as the conditions of it are of more immediate and practical importance to us, will probably require a more minute examination. We have seen that it is called the covenant of grace. Now this name was given it partly because it was granted us for no merits or deservings of ours, but out of God’s free grace or goodness ; and partly because free grace or help from God is one of the privileges we enjoy by being members of it. It is also called the Christian covenant, because, as we saw in the last lecture, it was purchased for us by the death of CHRIST.

That we may not use any word without first perfectly understanding its meaning, let us see what is meant by the word privilege, as we say that we enjoy the *privileges* of the covenant. A privilege is the power of doing something which others are not allowed to do, or of enjoying something which others are not allowed to enjoy. When a person allows me to walk in his grounds, or to

take fruit and flowers from his garden, when he does not allow all people to do so, he gives me a privilege; and thus, when God gives privileges to those whom He makes partakers of the covenant of grace, He means that He gives these people some right, or some enjoyment which He does not give to everybody. He gives light, and warmth, and health, and strength to everybody: but the privileges of the Christian covenant He keeps for Christians, and for Christians only.

Now, what are these privileges? The second answer in the Catechism will tell you. They are being “members of CHRIST, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.”

This last we will explain first—not, indeed, because it is of the least importance, for it is, in fact, the end and object of the other two privileges; but because it is easiest understood. Everybody knows that to inherit is to obtain something after death: and this we, as Christians, may interpret two ways, both of which are true—either that we, upon CHRIST’s death, naturally succeed to His kingdom, the Church—if we take the kingdom of heaven in that sense—or else, which I take to be the best way of reading it, that we now enjoy the prospect of going to heaven after our own death. We cannot go now before we die, for God will not falsify His own Word. He said to Adam, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” We must pass through the gates of death; but still, to go to heaven at all is a very great blessing; to be assured of it in this life is a very great privilege. It is a wonderful consolation in our afflictions, and help in our trials. It is a privilege that none can enjoy except Christians, who alone know that the Captain of their salvation, in a body like their own, has already risen; and they enjoy it, not from their own knowledge, but because God has elected them as fit persons to whom to reveal it. What and how great this privilege is, none can perfectly understand until they shall see God face to face, and know, even as they are known. Some idea we may form if we think on those whom we love best, and imagine what it would be to live

in a country, every inhabitant of which is as dear to us as they are; or even, were we to think of this earth, and reflect what it would be were every bad passion, and every wicked tongue, and deceitful heart banished out of it; still this is but a weak and imperfect idea, for we cannot, and in this life never shall, understand the enjoyment which flows from God's immediate presence, from seeing Him face to face. This is the great privilege we as Christians enjoy. It is revealed to us that we are "inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

But not only is the end or object revealed to us. We know the means also. We are "members of CHRIST," and "children of God." The blessings of Church membership, the advantages and privileges which the Church enjoys by being members of CHRIST, and which those do not enjoy who are not members of Him, is a thing at these times but little understood and valued. And yet it is not for want of CHRIST's explaining it. He calls Himself the Bridegroom, and the Church His Bride. He calls Himself the Vine, and the Church the branches. He calls Himself the Head, and the Church the body. And each one individual churchman, among the millions of others in all parts of the world—every one of you who now hear me, and have once been baptized in that font—members, limbs, that is, of that body, of which the Holy God of heaven is Himself the Head. This is a thing which few of us understand and value as we ought; but I believe that we do not appreciate it only because we do not rightly understand it.

You understand the meaning of a society or club for mutual assistance. Many of you belong to one. You see how it works; you know how benefits and advantages are enjoyed by belonging to a society which none of you could enjoy were you each one for himself. You understand the rules, the laws, the stewards, the officers. You have meeting days; some of you have festival days. You see honorary members, belonging to the society like any other members, deriving themselves no benefit from the society, yet supporting and upholding it in its difficulties. Why can you not from this form some idea



of that great and magnificent society—God’s Holy Catholic Church? Why can you not see the blessedness of being members? The mutual help and assistance which we derive from our membership? The necessity of its laws and rules—the Prayer Book, Articles, and Canons? The use of its officers and stewards—the stewards of God’s Word and mysteries? Its days of meeting—Sundays? Its festival days—the Holy Communion? And God forbid that I should compare to anything mortal, any thing of earth, the Great Head of our Society, Who alone derives no benefit from it, yet Who alone supports and upholds it; yet, can you not form some idea, however faint and imperfect, of CHRIST labouring for the Church, strengthening and comforting the Church, permitting Himself, Almighty and Eternal as He is, to be called one with the Church, from remembering those who in our little societies try, as He has commanded them, to follow His example?

But we are also the “children of God.” Now there are three kinds of sonship, by creation, by adoption, and by generation. To be God’s Son by generation, as we are the children of our natural fathers, can be said of CHRIST alone, and you will remember He is called in the Nicene Creed the only-begotten Son of God. To be God’s sons by creation, is what may be said of all mankind. But to be God’s sons by adoption is the privilege of CHRIST’s Church and of none else. A child is said to be adopted when he is taken into a family to which he does not naturally belong, and is treated by them as a son. In this sense, we who have been baptized into CHRIST’s Church are treated by God. We are regarded by Him as sons, co-heirs with His only *begotten* SON JESUS CHRIST. “Ye are all children of God,” says S. Paul, “by faith in CHRIST JESUS : for as many as have been baptized into CHRIST, have put on CHRIST.”

These then are the three privileges of the churchman ; for the past, forgiveness, for the present, grace, for the future, glory. And thus in relation to past, present, and future does the Church always remember them ; at baptism the Priest prays for the person baptized, that our

LORD JESUS CHRIST would vouchsafe to release him of his sins *past*, to sanctify him with the HOLY GHOST *now*, and to give him the kingdom of heaven and everlasting life *at some future time*. And again, in the Holy Communion, the Priest beseeches God to pardon and deliver His people from all their sins, *past*, to confirm and strengthen them in all goodness, *now*, and to bring them to everlasting life, *at some future time*.

To show you how our duties, that is the fulfilment of *our* promises to God, correspond with the fulfilment of God's promises to us, I will repeat them again. For the past, forgiveness, for the present, grace or help, for the future, happiness. Now see how our promises fit in as it were to these, for the past, repentance, for the present, faith, for the future, obedience.

And this is the covenant of grace. Forgiveness, help, and happiness, on God's part; repentance, faith, and obedience, on ours. It is called the covenant of grace, because God gave it to us of His own goodness, and not for our deserts; it is called also the Christian covenant, because CHRIST died to obtain it.

Now remember this is not simply a promise from God, but a covenant: and we said in the last lecture that a covenant implied two persons or parties each making promises to the other, and that the covenant came necessarily to an end if either party broke their word; remember how we compared it to a master hiring a servant. That the servant was not bound to work unless the master paid, and similarly, that the master was not bound to pay unless the servant worked. Remember too, how the first covenant, the covenant of works came to an end. Man broke his promise, and God's Truth was no longer bound by His. And then ask yourselves whether you can reasonably expect the Covenant of Grace to stand on a different footing. It is far more favourable to us no doubt, because we have forgiveness for the past, and grace or help for the present, because we are members of CHRIST, and children of God; but it is on the same footing, it is still a covenant, and if we break our promises, God gives up His. By baptism we

are to CHRIST what the hand or the foot is to the head, but the foot may be cut off, or the hand may be cut off, and if incurably diseased, it must be cut off; and if the hand or foot be cut off, it will die, though the body lives, so shall we die if we members be cut off from CHRIST.

Again, as CHRIST is the head of the Church, and we churchmen are its members; so the Queen is the head of the State, and we Englishmen are the members of the State. Now what is the consequence of a citizen renouncing his allegiance? He is put out of the Sovereign's protection, he ceases to be a member of the state, he loses all the privileges of citizenship, and is temporally ruined. And what is the consequence of the churchman renouncing allegiance to his Head? he is put out of CHRIST's protection, he ceases to be a member of the Church, he loses the privileges of churchmanship, and he is ruined everlastingly. A man may fall away after baptism, and though God is very merciful, and uses every means to call him back, yet there is somewhere a limit to His mercy. Our continued sin against continued warnings, is called sin against the HOLY GHOST; it shows that we have renounced our allegiance. And be assured we do renounce allegiance to our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, unless we do both in word and in deed, openly before the Bishop and the Church with our mouth, and secretly before our God and our conscience in our life, "renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and obey God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our lives."

Before we go on to the second division of the Catechism, Faith, which we shall do in the next lecture, we will examine the only point in the first division which has not yet been treated of, and that is the means by which we enter into this blessed covenant. We enter it by baptism, "Baptism doth save us," says S. Peter, that is, of course, puts us in the way of salvation, for we have seen that we may be cut off from the Church after we

have been adopted into it, as easily as the hand may be cut off from the body. And *this* baptism is far more than the outward sign, far more than the “putting away the filth of the flesh,” it is “the answer of a good conscience towards God;” that is to say, (for nothing in this life is intrinsically good), the answer of a conscience now freed from the curse of original sin. The outward sign derives its whole value from the simple circumstance, that CHRIST appointed it to be the means of conveying so great a grace. It is of value, of infinite value, but it derives it all from Him Who stamped it with that value, and left it to us, the representative of Himself, who alone is the door, the way, and the life. Any thing else might have had that same value had CHRIST so pleased, just as any other river might have cured Naaman the Syrian, had it so pleased God; but it did please Him to give us this, let us accept it and be thankful. And let us accept it in its fulness; CHRIST has called it being born again, “except ye be born of water and the Spirit, ye shall not see God,” CHRIST does not tell you which is the most necessary, the outward sign or the inward grace, but He says that both are indispensable, and that without both you shall not see God. This is being born again, it is being admitted into the society of CHRIST and all its privileges, created anew in God’s image as Adam was at first. In token of your being born again you have a new name given you, it is called your Christian name, and it is given you at the time when you are made members of CHRIST, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

It cannot be difficult for you to understand the value of an outward sign, if you remember our old illustration, a Friendly Society. What is the real value of the card which you receive on admission to the Friendly Society? next to nothing—and yet the possession of it makes all the difference between receiving the full benefits, and receiving nothing. The moment before you receive it you are like any one else, the moment after you receive it you are entitled to relief in sickness, old age, and death. So it is in baptism; the sprinkling of

water is to the Christian covenant what the card is to the Friendly Society—the sign of admission. When you have received it you are admitted, and do enjoy the privileges which before you did not enjoy. And thus it is that in the baptism of grown persons, such as we read of in the Testament, the change is immediate. Remember the jailor at Philippi, remember Saul; we have no one single instance of conversion in the New Testament without baptism, because CHRIST had appointed baptism as the outward sign by which they received the grace that worked these wonders.

But can they be received without faith? surely not, there can be no act of religion without faith.

Why then are children baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot have faith?

Can you see no difference between a man coming doubtfully and distrustfully, with sins on his conscience, and unbelief in his heart, and a child incapable of receiving any impressions? Will you limit God's mercies, and say man must understand before God will give help? The faithless and the unbelieving receive baptism though to their loss, but the child is not faithless. The child is not unbelieving, he is merely unconscious, and if the child should die, is it justice to punish it in its innocence, because it is incapable of understanding what faith is?

Depend upon it, it is not justice, neither is it God's doing. What He says is, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.

But how is it done? Faith is necessary; but the child, though not an unbeliever, cannot possess it. How? because God takes it for granted that he will have faith, and gives him the grace necessary for him beforehand. Did you never yourselves buy an article upon credit? God gives His grace upon credit, He requires faith—absolutely requires it; but God is mercifully pleased to wait that He may be gracious; He admits the child into covenant at once, because it is necessary to his salvation; and while he is a child He takes his faith for granted. If, when he grows up and



is capable of understanding it, he has faith, God confirms him; if he has not, God cuts him off from the covenant of grace.

It is true that in children we cannot see the immediate effects of this grace, nor ought we to expect to see them. This sacrament is pre-eminently called the sacrament of faith. We cannot see its effects, and we must be content to wait for them. See how it is with the natural man. The child, in its weak and tender body, has all the elements of manly strength. We know, for we see it every day, that without any fresh gift from God, without anything beyond what He gave it at its natural birth, the child will one day grow up to the strength and beauty of manhood. So also with its spiritual strength. As its natural strength was given in its natural birth, though we see it not, so is its spiritual strength given in its spiritual birth, though, in like manner, we see it not. They grow together; they increase together, till when the body reaches its natural stature, and the passions their natural growth, then also does the SPIRIT of God in the soul reach its full development. As we can, and often do, ourselves impair or destroy our natural strength, so we may, if we please, impair or destroy our spiritual strength. But, if unimpaired, each will grow up, as it were, naturally, so as to be sufficient, the one for our bodily, the other for our spiritual wants.

This is the way of escape which God has made proportioned to the temptation He lays upon us. This is the help which we, as churchmen, are privileged to call for, and which God in our Baptism has covenanted to send. By this we are more than conquerors through CHRIST, Who strengtheneth us. This is the greatest earthly privilege of the covenant of grace, that "they that are with us are more than they that are with them;" that "we can do all things through CHRIST that strengtheneth us." And this is the covenant which our godfathers and godmothers have made in our name, when as yet we were unable to do or think anything for ourselves. "Do you not, therefore, think that you are

bound to believe and to do as they have promised for you? Yes, verily, and by God's help, so we will; and we heartily thank our heavenly FATHER, that He hath called us to this state of salvation, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR: and we pray unto God to give us His grace, that we may continue in the same unto our life's end." This is the Church's doctrine—*continue* in the same. There is no fresh act of grace—there is no second forgiveness of sins—until that fearful day when we shall be judged according to our works, and (may it be our case) CHRIST shall take away the handwriting that is against us.

There is but one Baptism for the remission of sins; still, by earnest prayer you may obtain a continuance and renewal of that grace according to our LORD's own promise—"If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly FATHER give the HOLY SPIRIT to His adopted children that ask Him." Ask Him, therefore, in the words which the Bishop will soon offer for you, to defend you, who are by Baptism His children, with His heavenly grace, that you may continue His for ever, and daily increase in His HOLY SPIRIT more and more, till you come to His everlasting kingdom through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, to Whom with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

### III.

#### FAITH, OR THE CREEDS.

“He that believeth not shall be damned.”—S. Mark xvi. 16.

THIS text, we must remember, is intended for Christians, for those who have the offer of salvation made to them. We need not make a stumbling-block of the heathens, whom this text does not concern at all,—but among us, among those to whom the Christian covenant is offered, he who believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not, whether he has or has not been baptized, shall be damned.

And this is perfectly consistent with justice.

We have seen that, in order to enjoy the blessings promised by God in the Covenant of Grace,—namely, forgiveness for the past, assistance for the present, and happiness for the future,—it is absolutely necessary that we in our turn should keep our own promises, and that those promises are, repentance for the past, faith for the present, and obedience for the future; but as no one can well mistake what repentance is, the Catechism does not explain it any farther, but confines itself to the two other promises, which are not so easy to understand. We likewise will dismiss the subject with but two observations. The first is, that repentance, to be repentance at all, must mean also amendment, because no man can really be sorry for a thing which he goes to do again directly; and the second is, that repentance is just as necessary to salvation as either faith or obedience, for we are told, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise

perish.” The next promise, however,—faith,—requires more consideration. Faith is also necessary to salvation, for we read our SAVIOUR’S own assurance of that in the text, “He that believeth not shall be damned.” Now this is an assurance given at a very solemn time, and on a very important occasion. CHRIST was ordaining His Apostles, and telling them the conditions of his Gospel: “He that believeth and is baptized,” He said, “shall be saved, and he that believeth not” (whether baptized or not) “shall be damned.” I am now giving you your commissions, and this is what I ordain you to teach. That then which we are to believe, under pain of damnation, is the Gospel as commanded to be preached by the Apostles.

And as to preach the Gospel is not merely to publish one or two of the most important truths of it, and to keep back the rest, but to declare the whole counsel of God, so to believe the Gospel is not merely to believe that there was such a person as JESUS CHRIST, and that He was crucified for our sins, but to believe everything the Apostles were appointed to teach,—that is, the whole of the New Testament—and, as the New Testament is but a fulfilment of the Old, the whole of the Bible also.

First, let us see what we mean by the word “to believe.” S. Paul, we know, tells us that faith is the substance of things hoped for: to have faith, then, is to consider things as certain as if we had already the substance, that is, the real possession of them. But that is not all, for S. Philip tells the eunuch, “If thou believest with *all thy heart*, thou mayest be baptized,” and S. Paul also tells the Romans that their belief must be from *the heart* in order to be justified, for with the *heart*, he says, man believeth unto righteousness,—therefore a man must not only believe, but believe with the heart. Now, remember, this is not an idle distinction; to believe with the heart is a peculiar phrase, and it is not used without a peculiar meaning. To believe with the understanding or the head is to be perfectly certain a thing is true, but to believe with the heart is to be

suitably affected by it; when we know that to-day is Sunday, we believe it with our head; when we make up our minds always to come to church because it is Sunday, we believe it with our heart. These are two very different things, as we may easily see by referring to belief or faith in earthly things. A man living beyond his income must be sure—that is, must believe with his understanding or head, that if he goes on he will be ruined. But does it always follow that he will retrench? Yet he would do so if he believed it with his heart. A drunkard must be sure that he will ruin his constitution and waste his money; but because he believes this, will he become always a sober man? Not unless he lays to heart the misery that is before him.

Precisely the same is it with the Christian with respect to heavenly faith. He may believe with the understanding or head every word of the Bible, and yet not lay it to heart—that is to say, his conduct will no more be affected by it than is that of the spendthrift who believes he will be ruined, the drunkard who believes his constitution will be destroyed. But he *must* believe with the heart, in order that his Baptism may be efficacious, or his faith imputed for righteousness. Faith, therefore, we may define to be, such a thorough belief in the whole Word of God as will cause us to act differently from the way in which we should have acted did we not believe. And that is what the article means when it says, “Good works do spring necessarily out of a lively faith.”

Now, in what are we to believe with this lively faith? we have seen in the whole Word of God, but particularly in the New Testament. I am afraid, however, were I to ask you each individually how far you are acquainted with the whole Word of God,—that is, how much you have read and can remember and understand of the whole Bible,—you would most of you make but a poor answer. Some cannot read it and understand it, some will not; and few or none can so understand it as to pick out from the whole volume those truths which are necessary to frame their conduct by, and lead their



expectations right. To help us here the Church has provided for us the Creeds, and has done this from the very first. The Apostles' Creed is more ancient than some of the later portions of Scripture, and the English Church has placed it, as a thing necessary to be known, in the second division of the Catechism. To believe the Creed, then, is absolutely necessary to salvation. This, says the Church, is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly ; or, in the more energetic words of our SAVIOUR, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Why is this? Because the Creed is the whole Christian doctrine in short, proved by Scripture and sanctioned by the Church ; and therefore, to reject that is to reject the whole Christian doctrine as received by the Church from the Apostles' times. A Creed must be proved from Scripture, or it would not have authority ; and it must be also sanctioned by the Church, because it is intended to show not how any particular person, but how the Church interprets Scripture. Our Creed is both ; therefore, not to believe the Creed is not to believe Christianity.

And, be it observed, to believe in the Creed is to believe in the whole Creed. We are not at liberty to select one or two clauses, and to neglect the rest. It is a good deal the fashion to make the single clause, that JESUS CHRIST died for our sins, the test of Christians, leaving out our belief in the Holy Catholic Church. Now this in faith is much the same as it would be in duty to say we like the Sixth Commandment very well, and mean to keep it ; but as for the Seventh, we will pass over that. We were baptized on condition of our believing the whole Creed, as you will see from the service. If we do not believe the whole Creed, however we may be saved, (and it is not for me to say we shall not,) one thing is certain, we shall not be saved through the covenants of Baptism.

I have spoken hitherto of the Creed as of one, whereas if you look at the Prayer Book, you will find that there are three—the Apostles' Creed, which we repeat both in

morning and in afternoon service; the Nicene Creed, which belongs to the Communion Service; and the Athanasian Creed, which is assigned to particular days, and is repeated thirteen times every year. But, in truth, these two last are only commentaries and explanations of the Apostles' Creed, into which, as you will see by the Baptismal Service, you were baptized. The sponsors you will there see are asked whether they believe all the Articles of the Christian faith, that is, the Apostles' Creed; because, unless they thoroughly believe it themselves, they cannot teach to you faith in the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, into Whose Name you were then about to be baptized. The word creed is simply the Latin word *credo*, I believe; but the old name was *symbolum*, which signifies a watchword or countersign, as used by soldiers in war time. And that is precisely what the Creed is—it is the watchword of the Church militant. Ludolph, of Saxony, in his Life of CHRIST, describes the three Creeds thus, and his description will serve to explain to us the use of them. "There are three symbols (watchwords or tokens such as are used among soldiers of a garrison to recognise their comrades, and to detect intruders)—the first of the Apostles, the second of the Nicene Council, the third of S. Athanasius. The first for instruction in the faith, the second for explanation of the faith, the third for defence of the faith." In the simpler ages of the Church there was but one, the Apostles' Creed, telling us plain truths in plain language; but in process of time, people growing wiser, according to worldly wisdom, began to ask how these things can be. And about three hundred years after the Apostles' Creed was written, the Church found it necessary to put forth an explanatory Creed. You will easily see the nature of the doubts and questions which then arose, if you compare the two Creeds—thus the Apostles' Creed speaks of JESUS CHRIST as the only SON of GOD; but it was objected that we are all sons of GOD, therefore, as you will see, the words "only-begotten SON of GOD" were used in the Nicene Creed, in order to point out that JESUS is

the SON of GOD, as we are children of our fathers; whereas, we are sons of GOD by adoption, that is, by being taken from the family of Adam, to which we did belong, and admitted by Baptism into the household of GOD, to which we did not. Again, the Apostles' Creed believes in the HOLY GHOST, imagining that Christians had but to be reminded of this, and that nobody doubted who the HOLY GHOST was; but the Nicene Creed, finding from experience that it is necessary to define that He is a Person, and of the same nature as the FATHER and the SON, therefore uses these words, "proceeding from the FATHER and the SON."

Again, the Apostles' Creed states the fact that CHRIST was crucified; but the Nicene Creed finds it necessary to state distinctly that He was crucified *for us*, because even in those early days there were men who ventured to write sentiments somewhat similar to those which have obtained some celebrity in our own times. Such as this—"CHRIST is emphatically said to be our Atone-ment, not that we may attribute to GOD any change of purpose towards men by what CHRIST has done, but that *we* may know that we have passed from the death of sin to the life of righteousness by Him, and that our own hearts may not condemn us." In order to enable unlearned people to guard themselves against errors so dangerous as this, and lest they should be led to think that GOD's purpose was not changed by the death of CHRIST, it was necessary to write more explicitly, which is done in the words "for us."

There are many other additions in the Nicene Creed, which as I have not time to notice now, I will leave you to find out for yourselves, remarking only this, that you will never find the Creeds contradicting one another; it is merely the later Creed explaining the doubtful points of the Creed that went before it. They all declare the same truths, and consequently he who believes one must believe all.

Men have spoken of the Athanasian Creed as intolerant. I look on tolerant people with some suspicion. I do not find them tolerant of murder, because they

may be murdered ; nor of robbery, because the next robbery may be committed upon them ; but when only the glory of Almighty God is concerned, they can afford to be tolerant, and then they are more merciful than God Himself, and, imitating the devil in the book of Genesis, when God denounces death repeat his soothing language, “ye shall not surely die.” Depend upon it, to repeat God’s language plainly is the best of charities ; if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle ? It is of no use to be tolerant if God is not tolerant ; it is no use to cry peace, peace, where there is no peace, saith my God.

It has been objected also to the Athanasian Creed, that few people can understand its meaning ; and deep reason have we to thank God that it is so. It was easy enough to be understood when it was first written, for all those blasphemous and absurd opinions which it attacks, and which to us are incomprehensible, were then familiar in the mouths of men, all claiming to belong to CHRIST’S Church, all quoting Scripture in support of their different absurdities, and all claiming the right of private judgment to interpret that Scripture their own way. One denied the Divinity of the HOLY GHOST, another His existence. One said that our Blessed SAVIOUR was not man ; another said He was not God. One said that there was no SON nor HOLY GHOST ; another said that FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST were three different individuals, like three different men. All these, thank God, are past and forgotten, and the very sentence by which the Church condemned them has become incomprehensible to most of us, because most of us have never heard the history of those divisions it refers to. They, like our modern dissent, have risen on the name of some clever individuals, have flourished, faded, and are forgotten ; and others have succeeded them and have faded, and have been forgotten also, while the Church remains like the God Who founded it, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. That is why the Athanasian Creed is so difficult for us to understand. But is it therefore useless ? It may be useless now as a pro-

fession of faith, but it is also a record of schism: it shows to what blasphemous absurdities men have been led who ventured to throw off the authority of the Church, and warns us, that what man has done, man may do. That while we are one body, of which CHRIST is the Head, He is with us always. When each man stands by himself or his own party, the devil gleans all. You do not now want to be told that our Blessed SAVIOUR is GOD as well as man, or that there is a HOLY GHOST, a Comforter. But how do you know how long it will be before the self-will of man will render such a warning necessary to keep GOD's true servants in the faith. You may learn the use of the Creeds, and of the Athanasian in particular, from the hedges you make round your own fields. While the whole country is quiet the hedge is perfectly useless, and certainly it bears no fruit, still you make it, and you trim it and you care for it, and you see that it is sound throughout, and always kept up, because you cannot tell how soon riotous cattle or ill-disposed men may show that the soundness of the hedge is the salvation of the crop. The Bible is the seed of the Church, the Creeds are its hedge, and next to the Bible the Creeds are the most valuable possession it enjoys.

There is one thing to be learnt from the arrangement of the Catechism; two things are necessary to salvation, faith and obedience, the Creed and the Commandments, but the Creed comes first: faith comes first, and good works do spring out of a lively faith. And if a man does these, says our SAVIOUR, he shall know these things whether they be of GOD. We have never attempted to reverse this teaching of the Church in you; we never waited till you could understand first, in order that you might believe afterwards; we placed the ideas there, we taught you by rote; and, now that the understanding has come, you see the advantage of it, for you find the materials of your faith ready. None of you who were trained in the Church school can remember when you first heard that you had GOD for your FATHER, CHRIST to save you, and the Heavenly SPIRIT to make



and keep you holy. You can no more tell me when you learnt your religion, than when you learnt to breathe. If the enemy attempts to sow tares in your minds now, I hope he will find the wheat already grown. I am sure he ought.

We have but little time left to examine the Creed itself, and I must go rapidly through it. We were baptized into the Name of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST. What we are chiefly taught in these articles of our belief, is the separate office of these three Persons of the undivided Trinity, into Whose Name we have been baptized, i.e., in the words of the Catechism, "to believe in God the FATHER, Who made us and all the world," that is, the beasts, the birds, the fishes, the angels, the sun and moon, as well as ourselves.—In God the SON, who redeemed, not all the world, but all mankind, the heathens, the savages, those who lived before He came into the world, as well as those who never heard of His Name.—And in the HOLY GHOST, Who sanctifieth, not all mankind, not the heathens and savages, but the elect or chosen people of God. That is the Church, who, like you, were baptized in His Name, and who, like those in old times, live in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers.

I believe in God the FATHER, then, means far more than I believe there is a God, for the devils believe so much; it means I acknowledge God as a FATHER, who made me and all the world, and I mean to pay Him the respect due to a father, and in a greater degree, inasmuch as He is a FATHER Almighty, and made heaven and earth. If you believe God the SON, you must believe something more than that He *was* God the SON, and that He died to take away the power of the devil, for the very devils, when He cast them out, confessed thus much. Yet you do not suppose *they* were saved: to be saved yourself, you must believe more than they did; you must believe that JESUS CHRIST is our LORD, that is, our Master, one who has a right to our obedience. You must believe that He was conceived

by the HOLY GHOST, or, in the words of the Nicene Creed, that He was very God of very God, because the SON of GOD is GOD. And you must believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, because the son of a woman is a man, "man of the substance of His mother." This is necessary to salvation, because were He not God, the sacrifice of His life would never be of sufficient value to satisfy God, and were He not man, as we are, that sacrifice would not apply to us, who are not Gods, but men. That He suffered under Pontius Pilate, that He was crucified, dead, and buried, are matters of history as well as of faith; but we must believe that His soul was really parted from His body, and that it went to that unseen place, called in the Creed hell, and by our SAVIOUR Paradise, where the spirits of just men await their final sentence. We must believe this, in order that we may believe the joyful doctrine contained in the next clause. That He, as man, rose from the dead, and therefore that we, as men, shall rise also. We must believe that He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, if we would think of Him as a Mediator and Advocate. And we must believe that He will come from thence at the end of the world, if we expect to be judged according to our works; or, to use the words of inspiration, if we believe "that He will give to every man according as his works shall be."

If you believe in the HOLY GHOST, you must believe in His earthly dwelling-place, the Holy Catholic Church. That is the congregation of all faithful men, throughout the world. Faithful is the word we use, that is, those who believe *all* the articles of the Christian faith, not some of them, neglecting the others; who are admitted into that congregation by baptism, and who continue in it by living in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, *i.e.*, the Communion, and in prayers. You need not expect that all will be good who belong to that Church on earth, because your SAVIOUR has told you that it is like a net cast into the sea, which gathers of all kinds, the bad and the good. Nor may you expect that all who have been predestinated

and elected into that Church will be saved, because you know that CHRIST chose or elected twelve, and of them one was a devil, and went to his own place; but you must consider yourself as one of the called and elected. You must *therefore* labour to make *your* calling and election sure, because you know that you were only grafted into CHRIST's Church by Baptism, and are not one of the natural branches of the tree; and you may easily reason, even if S. Paul had not told you, that if God spared not the natural branches, there is no reason why He should spare you. This is shown in one word in the answer that follows the Creed. You observe that God the FATHER made, and God the SON redeemed, *i.e.* did a thing which is now past and done: but of God the HOLY GHOST, it is not said that He sanctified, but that He sanctifieth. That is continually, always, day by day, employs Himself in sanctifying or making holy us, the elect people of God. We are none of us as yet holy in ourselves, but we are all, let us hope, daily becoming so by help of that HOLY SPIRIT. Still He will not always strive with those who grieve Him by going on in sin. And we must therefore watch against anything approaching to wrong, lest we harden our hearts and cause the HOLY SPIRIT to give us up. We cannot do or think anything good if we are deserted by the HOLY GHOST, for we are told that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves, that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves, that our sufficiency is of God. The worst thing that can befall us in this world is, that God should take that HOLY SPIRIT from us, for as we were not members of CHRIST before we received Him, so we cease to be members of CHRIST after He is taken away. God's words on that subject are, except a man *have*, *i.e.*, continue to possess, the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of His. And when a man ceases to be a member of CHRIST, he loses his covenanted title to salvation.

Let us be warned by this awful possibility; but, in the mean time, let us thank God for the four privileges He has given to His Church. 1st. The Communion of

Saints, and do not let us confuse that, as so many do, with (2nd) the Catholic Church. The Church is that body governed by the Apostles' successors, and living in the Apostles' laws; in virtue of our being members of the Church we enjoy the privilege of (a) the Communion of Saints; that is, joint interest and friendly union with the holy men of old, who are dead, and whose souls are in Paradise, as well as with those who are still upon earth, and in whose prayers we partake; (b) the ministration of the angels, who do minister to us, though we may not worship them, and, above all, (c) the fellowship of JESUS CHRIST; "ye have fellowship," says S. John, "with us, and truly our fellowship is with the FATHER, and His SON JESUS CHRIST." As members of the Church, and in that capacity alone, we enjoy forgiveness of sins in baptism, as I before explained in baptism, as members of the Church, therefore, we alone are certified (3rd) of the resurrection of the body, because it is only by being buried with Him in baptism that we are certified of rising with Him. And, lastly, as true members of the Church, unforsaken by the HOLY GHOST, we alone can enjoy the prospect (4th) of life everlasting, because to such only it will be a privilege or advantage, to those who are cast out it will be the greatest of all evils.

This is the Catholic faith, which, except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved. And that not because the Church has pronounced the sentence, but because every one of these things is taken from the Bible, to every one of them separately God has added a damnable clause, and on the whole CHRIST has placed the seal of the text, "he that believeth not shall be damned."

This is why the Church makes it imperative that all her members shall learn the Creed. Just consider what an awful thing it would be for a person, on his deathbed, to be ignorant of God the FATHER, his Creator, God the SON, his only Redeemer, and God the HOLY GHOST, his only Comforter. Now the Church considers us as if we were all on our death-beds, or at least only a little way from them. The services of the Visitation of the

Sick and the Burial of the Dead, come very close after Baptism and the Catechism. As *we* should wish to die, so would the Church have us live; if it be an awful thought to pass into eternity in wilful ignorance or negligence of the truths of the Gospel, is it not also an awful thought that people should spend this, their time of trial, in such ignorance and negligence. Let us do so no more, let us learn the Creed, let us study the Creed and see what it means, and let us act up to the Creed, *i.e.*, let us have a lively faith, if we have been ignorant, let us be ignorant no longer. You know that without faith it is impossible to please God; see and examine then what faith is, amend what has hitherto been deficient in it, and join with heart and soul in that petition of the Litany which beseeches God to give us true repentance, to forgive us not only our sins, but our negligences and ignorances also, and to endue us with the grace of His HOLY SPIRIT, that we may amend our lives according to His holy word.



#### IV.

#### PRAYER.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”—  
S. James v. 16.

HITHERTO I have been bringing to your recollection the promises that you have made to God, or rather those which have been made in your name, and which you will shortly declare before the congregation, as I trust you have long felt, and often before professed, though not quite so publicly, that you acknowledge and take them for your own.

These promises, we have seen, are repentance, faith, and duty, as shown by the Creed and the Commandments. In examining these, as we have done lately, it must have occurred to us how very much more comprehensive, and how very much more difficult to perform these promises really are, than at first sight they appear. That repentance, without which we shall all perish, is something more than being sorry for our sins. That faith, without which it is impossible to please God, is something more than believing that there is such a person as CHRIST; and that obedience, the fruit of faith and the works meet for repentance, is more than keeping the mere letter of the law. The more we examine into these things, the more difficult we shall find it to perform them. No one thinks his duty in this world an easy thing, or his faith a matter of easy learning, or his repentance a thing to be taken up and gone through in a few days, and those perhaps, his last days,

except the man is so ignorant as not to know what faith, duty, and repentance are. It does not require the inspiration, or even the knowledge of S. Paul, to find out what S. Paul has told us, that "there is a law in our members, warring against the law of our mind." This law in our members is Original Sin, sin which we derive from being begotten in the likeness not of God, but of Adam. And, as you may recollect my explaining to you in my first lecture, it shows itself in an inclination to sin, which certainly God has not, and which therefore we should not have were we still in God's image and after His likeness. We find, therefore, that in making these three promises of repentance, faith and obedience, we have promised more than we are able to perform. Here then we fall back upon our privileges, that is to say, upon what God promised to us, in the covenant He has made with us. And these you will recollect we explained, were not only forgiveness for the past, and happiness for the future, but also grace, that is help, for the present. We cannot keep our promises without God's help, and therefore we claim that help as part of our covenant. We claim it, not because we are righteous and deserve to have it, but we claim it in virtue of God's promise, the oath that He swore to our forefathers. He gave it to us at our baptism, freely; and *because* He gave it to us, it became our possession: and thus, as soon as we find we want it, we claim it with confidence.

Do not let us forget that it is a privilege, that is to say, a something which we Christians enjoy, though every one does not enjoy it. When we talk of our right, as *Englishmen*, to petition the Queen, we imply, that if we were not Englishmen, we should have no such right; let this convey to us some idea of our right, as Christians, to petition our God. It is a right that we should not enjoy if we were not Christians.

Were it not for this grace or heavenly help, which by promise becomes our right, there would be no very great difference between our position and that of Adam under the covenant of works; like him, we should have happi-

ness if we obeyed ; but as he fell, so might we expect to fall, if God had not given us something that he did not possess. That something is grace, and of so great importance is it, that the Christian covenant takes its name from this circumstance, and is called the Covenant of Grace. But on that subject, and on the SAVIOUR by Whose sacrifice this covenant was obtained, we have already treated at large.

The peculiarity of the Christian covenant is, not that we were, at our new birth or baptism, born without sin, in the sense of our original sin being taken away, but that we had THEN a new strength given us, by which we may resist and overcome that natural inclination to sin, which we call original sin, and may, notwithstanding the corruption of our nature which still remains, produce works pleasing to God. It is something like putting manure upon a thoroughly exhausted field ; by itself the field will produce nothing, but it will come into heart and produce a good crop, in virtue of something added to it which does not by nature belong to it. Hence I think it is dangerous to let our minds rest too much on the total corruption of our nature, except as a matter of thankfulness to our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who called us who were sometimes afar off. It is dangerous for this reason, because he who is in the habit of considering himself incapable of anything, will not attempt anything ; it leads curious and carnal persons into that state described by the seventeenth article, “to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God’s predestination,” which the same article describes as “a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into recklessness of unclean living no less perilous than desperation.”

In words the doctrine is perfectly true : such by nature we were, totally corrupt, incapable of goodness, like an exhausted field ; but such by grace we *are* not, we have a power not our own, we are as the “smell of a field that the LORD has blessed.” We are instructed by the Catechism to call ourselves members of CHRIST, that is, parts of CHRIST. And as the hand, though dead and

powerless when cut off, has real strength when joined to the body, so have we (though in ourselves powerless) real strength when joined with CHRIST.

But here I must notice a Popish error into which many are deceived. It seldom happens that it is necessary to notice the Popish errors, as we must those which Protestants fall into, because there are few Roman Catholics here to lead you into the one, though there are many erring Protestants to lead you into the other. This, however, is a doctrine so pleasing to us, that many of us do keep it and cherish it at the very time when we are most crying out against Popery. I do not mean that we profess it in words, but that we give evidence of it by our conduct. The Romish doctrine with respect to works done in CHRIST is this,—that though by ourselves we can do nothing, yet that by the grace of God we have the power of doing good works, and that these works are pleasing and acceptable to Him. Thus far it is all right, and exactly the same as we teach, and the Apostles and Apostolic men have taught before us; but they say that these good works done in CHRIST may be more than God requires from man for his salvation, and therefore, when he has done more than his duty at one time, it will make up for having done less than his duty at another: in short, though the Romanist allows his works to be done in CHRIST, he makes his good works *atone* for his bad ones, and his penance *earn* his absolution. *We* say, that by the grace of CHRIST we do good works, but we say that these works at their best are no more than what God requires; and therefore, when we have resisted the HOLY SPIRIT and have not done them, we have nothing to set against the falling off,—nothing to make an atonement with,—and therefore must come to CHRIST as our Advocate, and claim *His* first promise, forgiveness, on the performance of *our* first promise, repentance.

The teaching of our Catechism is this: after explaining to us how very much is meant by our faith, and how very much by our duty, it says, “My good child, know this, that thou art not able to perform these

things of thyself, nor to walk in His Commandments and serve Him, without His special grace." To give us this grace, He requires us to ask for it; and hence we see the necessity of prayer.

With respect to prayer, we generally make this mistake: we consider it in the light of a duty we ought to perform, whereas we should consider it in the light of a privilege which we ought to value. We shall obtain nothing from God without prayer, either of ourselves, or of others praying for us, it is true; but, strictly speaking, it is no more our duty than it is the duty of a man who has got a petition drawn up for him, to go round the parish to ask assistance from it. It is true that, if he do not exert himself and make use of his paper, he will remain in the same wretched condition as he was in before it was drawn up; but in going with it round the parish and presenting his paper, he is exercising a privilege, not doing a duty,—he is benefiting nobody but himself or his friends by it. So is it with our prayers: it is of no use or benefit to God that we pray to Him, but we come to that place which God has appointed in order to present, for our own good, the petition which JESUS CHRIST has drawn up for us. I do not like to speak of the duty of coming to Church; we ought to come to Church, certainly, we who are able—we cannot be Christians unless we do come to Church, and we ought besides to pray privately by ourselves, and such of us as have families ought to lead them to pray; but all this is not a duty, but a privilege,—the privilege of asking your Heavenly FATHER for what you want, and of knowing that, if it is good for you, and you ask it faithfully, He will give it you. You must do this if you would be saved, but that does not make the power of so doing less a privilege or blessing. It is not your duty to breathe, yet without breathing you will die: so it is not your duty to pray, yet without praying you will die everlastingly.

You recollect that our SAVIOUR taught His disciples to pray, but He did not do so till they first felt the want of some form of prayer, and asked Him. Then it was



that He drew up that form of prayer that I have likened to a written petition, and before He left the earth He permitted them to present it to our Heavenly FATHER in His Name.

Before we examine the LORD's Prayer itself, which is in fact the model and precedent of our prayers,—the title, as it were, by which we have confidence to pray at all,—it will be necessary to define what we mean by the word prayer. Prayer generally is an address to God, expressing religious feelings, but those feelings may take different forms, according to the particular service we are engaged in : in confession, we express humility ; in petition, desire ; in thanksgiving, gratitude ; and in intercession, good-will towards our neighbours. That our prayer may be a prayer at all, it must have some or all of these feelings at the time we are making it, otherwise it is but a form of words. God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. It is also necessary that our prayer should be made in faith,—that is to say, that we should believe, what our SAVIOUR told us, that there is some use in prayer,—that we are to get ourselves some good by praying which we should not get if we did not pray,—that by it we do prevail on God to give us blessings which otherwise we could not obtain. Our SAVIOUR says, " Ask, and ye shall have." S. James says, " The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Now, if we make our prayer without believing that we shall get what we ask for, and that our prayer will avail, then we are praying without faith, or, in other words, we are not praying at all. We have plenty of examples in the Bible where prayers were answered from God. We may remember Lot saving the town of Zoar, and Moses twice preserving the children of Israel, and Job turning away the wrath of God from his three friends, Hezekiah procuring his own recovery from sickness, and Manasseh obtaining deliverance for himself out of the prison in Babylon,—and as for common prayers, that is to say, prayers which were made together and in common, can we not remember the prayers of the Church procuring S. Peter's de-

liverance from prison at Jerusalem? These and many more examples of prayer answered by God were recorded for our encouragement; and whenever we fail in getting from God what we ask for, we shall do well to ask ourselves, did we pray for it with a doubting mind?

We now come to the form of prayer which our SAVIOUR gave us, and do not forget that it is a *form* of prayer; had our blessed SAVIOUR thought it sufficient that we should pray with our minds, He never would have given us a form at all. The LORD'S Prayer is to the fourth division of the Catechism (that about prayer) what the Creed is to faith, and the Commandments to duty. As these are a summary of all we ought to believe and to do, so the other is a summary of all we ought to pray for. It is not a peculiarity now (may we be thankful for the blessing), but it was a peculiarity when that prayer was first given to the Church, that it is addressed to God not as our Creator, but as our FATHER. It is, as it was once called, the prayer of the baptized; for God is but the Maker or Creator of the world in general; He is the FATHER of those whom He has made His sons by adoption, and admitted by Baptism into His Church. In the days when most of the people were heathens, this prayer was always made in silence, as we say our collect on entering Church. The deacon indeed called out, "Let us pray," in order that the people might all pray together; but the people repeated in silence the LORD'S Prayer, speaking at most in an undertone, and this was done, it is said, lest any unbaptized man should learn it, and so endanger himself by using a form of address to which God had given him no right. We are all God's adopted children now, and there is now no reason for this; still we ought to make this prayer in a lower and more reverential tone than we do the rest of the service, because these are the very words of our Blessed LORD, and if this should at any time remind us of those days when it was made in actual silence, we ought to thank God that to us He has been a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as a glory to His people Israel.

Our first petition is that we may hallow God's Name,—that is, speak of it in a holy and reverential manner; and when we remember the terrible punishment that He sent upon Aaron's two sons, who offered what is called strange fire, which is much the same as if we were to offer unauthorised prayers, we shall be very cautious how we make use of our own words in addressing Him. Remember what He said when He destroyed those two presumptuous men, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me"—that is, My Name must be hallowed. The first petition, therefore, of the first prayer we make, either in the morning or in the evening, or in the Communion Service, is, that God's Name may be hallowed. Let us only think of this, and act as we pray, and we shall have no more inattention in Church.

As our first prayer is for the glory of God's Name, so our second is for the increase of His Church,—here called, as it often is, His kingdom,—God's kingdom of grace is His Church on earth,—God's kingdom of glory is His Church in heaven; in this petition we pray for both,—that His way may be known upon earth, and (as we pray more at large in the burial service) that it will please Him of His gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom: and remember that we are going against the prayer of that petition when we make divisions in the Church, or encourage those that do, or indeed when we set a bad example in anything.

The next petition is but the necessary consequence of the last: in the last, "Thy kingdom come," we pray that all men may become Christians, or belonging to CHRIST's Church: in this, "Thy will be done," we pray that CHRIST's Church may produce its proper fruit, universal holiness: it *is* done in heaven by the angels, at all times and in all respects, and we pray that it may be done on earth by men in like manner, at all times and in all respects. Now remember, when we do not do God's will ourselves, we cannot say that prayer in earnest,—we cannot pray for one thing and do another.

We first pray for God's glory, then for His Church, and we do not pray for ourselves till we have done that. We should learn from this to accustom our minds to think of God first, and of ourselves and our temporal wants afterwards,—our souls before our bodies,—or, in our SAVIOUR's words, to seek the kingdom of God first, and His righteousness, and to trust that He will add all things necessary for us afterwards. We pray for our daily bread; this should teach us moderation. We pray for bread,—that is, necessities, not luxuries; and it should teach us to pray often, for we do not pray for bread once for all, but day by day; and if this petition be made in earnest, we must use the means which God has given to supply us with bread,—that is, our industry in our several states; if we do not, our deeds and our words do not go together; we are not in earnest; we cannot pray for one thing and do another.

We then pray to be forgiven "our trespasses." S. Matthew calls them our debts,—that which we have left undone or unpaid before God. We pray to be forgiven them, for we never can pay them. Nothing that we can do in future will make up for what we have left undone. If God do not for CHRIST's sake forgive us, we are lost, and (remember that awful parable of the servant who owed ten thousand talents) God will not forgive us, even for CHRIST's sake, unless we "forgive them that trespass against us." Remember, when we use that prayer with malice in our hearts, we pray that God would *not* forgive us; our very prayer is a curse upon our own selves.

We next pray that God would not lead us into temptation, but would deliver us from evil. Now, to "tempt," means, certainly, maliciously to entice men to sin, as when the devil tempted our SAVIOUR; but that is not the sense in which it is used here; it means also to try men, to put them to trials in order to see whether or not they be faithful, as when, in chap. xxii. of Genesis, God is said to have tempted Abraham. Now, we are, or ought to be, modest and diffident of our own strength, and we fear the trial. We pray,

then, that God would either keep us out of temptation, or support us under it; and it is a good and a useful prayer; but then we must not tempt or try ourselves: in order to make our words and our deeds tally, we must go where we know others have fallen, or place ourselves in doubtful or difficult situations, because we think we are strong enough. We cannot expect God to take care of us, if we will not take care of ourselves. He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, it is true, but that will not save us if we choose to tempt ourselves.

We conclude the whole with what is called the doxology, or praise of God's Name. When we say that His is the kingdom, we acknowledge that He has the right to withhold all and everything we have asked for; when we say "Thine is the power," we admit His power to do so; while "Thine is the glory" means that, if He grants them, all praise will belong to Him for ever and ever.

This is the model of all prayer. God's glory first, and the welfare of His Church; then our own; perfect submission and content, whether God thinks fit to answer our prayers or to refuse them; and giving to God the glory when we meet with success. This is our Lord's own notion of the meaning of prayer, and such is the frame of mind into which all prayer should bring us.

It remains only that we should see when this prayer should be used. It should be used both in public and in private, for both of these has our SAVIOUR commanded, and to both of them has He attached rewards. "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy FATHER which seeth in secret, and thy FATHER which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." This is for private prayer. But when He speaks of public or common prayer, He says, "Again I say unto you, that if two shall agree on earth touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My FATHER which is in heaven, for where two or three are gathered together in



My Name, there am I in the midst of them." Private prayer may be with the heart alone; common prayer must be in common, and therefore aloud; and so we read of those with the Apostles that they lift up their voices with one accord. In this our Church stands pre-eminent. The Romanists come to Church to *see* their priests perform the service,—they are spectators; the Protestant Dissenters come to their meeting-house to *hear* their preachers extemporize a prayer or preach a sermon,—they are hearers; we come to PRAY together, like the Apostles, to lift up our voices with one accord,—we are worshippers. Do not let this glorious peculiarity of the English Church fall into disuse, as it does among many of you. Many, I know, still unite their voices in God's praise, still join in the responses to the prayers; but it should be universal,—none should be exceeding in loudness, but none should be silent; depend upon it, whoever is silent is so far neglecting his common prayer,—that is to say, he is not praying in common with his neighbour, he is not lifting up his voice with one accord.

We have now considered prayer as the necessary preliminary to God's sending upon us that grace without which we cannot hope to keep our promises, and *that* upon the well-known principle that what is not worth asking for is not worth having,—or, to speak more reverentially, that we must feel our want before God will supply it.

In our next we will examine the various outward means through which that grace is sent us,—in the use of which we profess our repentance, exercise our faith, perform our duty, and receive our earthly reward: that is to say, strength to believe better, to do more, and to be more acceptable to God, for this is the only true reward that God gives here below, or which we ought to wish for,—this and that peace of mind that nothing but God can give, and nothing but our sins can take away.

## V.

### SACRAMENTS.

“Stewards of the mysteries of God.”—1 Cor. iv. 1.

THIS is but a short text, and yet it has two words in it, both of which require explanation. These two words are “stewards” and “mysteries.”

“Stewards” are men who are employed by a superior, which superior engages them and authorises them to transact his own business.

The word “mysteries” tells us what, in the particular case of God’s stewards, this business is. God’s stewards, therefore, are men specially commissioned by God, and their principal business is to dispense God’s mysteries.

Now, what are the “mysteries” which it is the business of these men to dispense? To explain this is the object of my sermon.

Properly speaking, a mystery is a religious act, the full meaning and import of which is known and felt by the elect alone, though the outward sign by which it is signified may be seen and known by the world at large. I will explain this more fully presently, but in the meanwhile we will say it is what is expressed in the Catechism by an outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace. Therefore, the word mystery is here used to signify the ordinances of the Church, but more especially the Sacraments.

I do not know anything that more indicates the low state of religion into which we, as a country, have fallen, and from which we are only just beginning to revive, than the little knowledge we all have of God’s ordi-

nances. The moral law, if not kept, at least is known; a man may steal, but he is not ignorant that in so doing he is doing wrong; but with respect to God's ordinances—that is to say, means of grace provided and ordered by God, there is no such consciousness; and the blessed Sacraments themselves have been, and are still, neglected by hundreds of thousands who are all the time unconscious that in neglecting them they are neglecting the means which CHRIST has appointed by which to save them. Men's minds are now becoming awakened to these things. Means are provided which a few years ago were never thought of. Still it is not to be wondered at that those who have been kept so long without the blessing should be ignorant of its value; and now, that they have the privilege so long denied them, that they should neglect to avail themselves of it. Men do not know how they receive God's grace. When asked, their answer nine times in ten is, "by praying for it." But evidently that is not how they *receive* it, it is how they ask God for it. We shall see this at once if we sum up the general teaching of the Catechism, and take in the whole of it in one view.

Of the five divisions of which we have spoken already, the first shows us what is the nature of our agreement with God. The next two explain our part of the agreement, Faith and Obedience, while the last two relate to God's part, Forgiveness and Grace.

I told you in the first lecture that none of these five parts can be considered altogether without reference to the others, and you must see that it is so—that there can be no obedience without faith; that faith is not faith at all without obedience; that there can be neither obedience nor faith without God's grace; and that God's grace would be useless to us if we had not His forgiveness also. All these are bound, as it were, together: but more especially the last two divisions—the means of asking for God's grace, and the means of receiving it. They are closely connected; still you must not confuse the one with the other, and answer, as three

out of four do answer, when I ask them by what means they expect to receive God's grace; you must not say, by praying for it. True it is that if you do not pray you will not have; but to ask is one thing, and to receive is another. You ask in prayer; you receive through God's ordinances.

An ordinance means a thing ordered or commanded. God's ordinances therefore mean things ordered or commanded by God. From the very beginning of the world down to the present day God's rule seems to be precisely the same. Whatever grace or mercy He designed to bestow on man, He seems invariably to have annexed to it the performance on man's part of some slight outward sign. If man performed the duty, then God gave him the blessing; if man neglected or despised the duty, then he lost the blessing. The blessing came from God, but the channel God used to convey it to man was the ordinance. Man received the blessing through the ordinance. This trial seems to be given in order to prove his faith; and, in order to prove it thoroughly, we find that a difficult or costly service is very seldom selected by God. It is something very easy of performance, something that anybody can do, something that if he does not do, it cannot be from want of ability, but because he does not believe the promises which God has attached to it. Thus Adam ruined himself and his posterity by eating of one tree rather than of another. Moses lost his life because he struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Naaman had nearly missed being cured of his leprosy, because he refused to perform the outward sign; but on his coming to himself and performing it received his cure. Now all this is perfect justice. According to the words of the covenant which we have been considering all along, God engages to give His grace or help, not to those who do any thing to profit or benefit Him, not in reward or return for service done, but to those, and those only, who in return put their *whole* trust and faith in Him. Now, it is quite evident that if God commands us to do a thing that it is plain to ourselves is easy to do, and

we do not do it, it must be that we have no faith in God, that we do not believe that we shall get any good by doing it, or receive any harm by not doing it. We therefore show that we have no faith on our part. God therefore gives no grace on His part, and without His grace we perish. I mean this, plainly; if God tells us, "Whoso eateth this bread shall live for ever," and we, having this bread before us, will not eat of it, we say by our deeds that we do not believe God.

To show us that it is a matter of God's free grace that we receive the blessing, the outward sign is always something totally insufficient to produce the effect. Moses stretches forth his rod and all Egypt is plagued; he strikes the rock, the waters flow; he raises his hands, the Amalekites are conquered. Now, nobody can suppose that the raising of Moses' hands, or his striking the rock, did in itself produce the effect; but by so doing he showed his faith; and his faith was rewarded by a blessing. So, if we go on—Elijah struck the waters with his mantle, and they divided. Naaman bathed in the Jordan, and he washed off his leprosy. Hezekiah put on a plaster of figs, and he recovered. The blind man whom JESUS had anointed washed in the pool of Siloam and recovered his sight. The woman touched the hem of JESUS' garment, and the issue of her blood was stopped. These are but a few instances out of hundreds which you may find from the beginning of the Bible to the end of it. It is rare, indeed, to find a blessing given without the performance of some act of acknowledgment or homage; or, in the words of the Catechism, without some outward visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace. Some people seem to consider S. Paul's saying that we do not live by ordinances to be a sort of forbidding us to perform ordinances. No man lives by ordinances, but he lives because he shows his faith by performing the particular ordinances which God has ordained for *him*. S. Paul was writing to Jews who wished to make all men keep *their* ordinances, which were given to them in order to prepare them for the first Advent of CHRIST; whereas, what God required



Christians to perform were the Christian ordinances, in order to prepare them for the second.

Now an ordinance is of use only *because* God commands it, and *as long* as He commands it, and to *the people to whom* He commands it. It would have been no mark of faith in Abraham had he struck the rock, or in Moses had he sacrificed his son; they would have shown no faith in so doing, and they would have received no blessing. Thus, also, we should receive no grace by sacrificing a lamb at the Passover, nor would the Jews in the wilderness had they eaten bread and drunk wine. But God commanded *them* to kill the Passover, and us to eat the bread and drink the wine. By these two different things they showed then, and we show now, the same faith; they showed then, and we show now, the LORD's death till He come; and we both receive the allotted reward of faith—grace. Had they neglected or despised their ordinance in their times, or do we neglect or despise ours now, we both show the same thing, want of faith; and we both alike lose our reward.

We are not now considering the extraordinary means of grace by which God sometimes, though rarely, does even now bring men to a sense of their sins, such as sickness, change of fortune, change of situation, war, famine, and other special interpositions; which we may meet with, but which we have no right to look for, because God has not covenanted to send them. We must consider only the ordinary channels—things which God has already given us, and taught us to look for and make use of. Among these I will not reckon prayer, for there is no ordinance without it—it is rather like the air by which we enjoy all things than an enjoyment in itself. God's ordinances are—Public Worship, Reading His Word, Preaching. In a higher rank come public services, ordered by the Church on its own authority, agreeable to God's Word, though not specifically mentioned in it—such as the Churching of Women, the Burial of the Dead, Special Prayers and Thanksgivings. Higher still are public offices, taken from

GOD's own Word directly, and ordered by the Church, not on her own authority, but because they are in GOD's Word—such as the LORD's Day, Confirmation, Matrimony, the Visitation of the Sick, the Ordering of Priests and Deacons; while, above all, the very seals of the covenant, the very words of our Blessed SAVIOUR, that by which we are placed in covenant, and kept in covenant, without which no Christian can be saved, come the blessed Sacraments themselves.

In all these you will observe the same character, in all these is some outward sign, some bodily act of worship, as well as some spiritual grace; but more and more plain, as the office itself is of more and more importance; the *act* of coming to church, the *act* of kneeling, the ring, the imposition of hands, the washing, the bread and wine, all these are outward signs, and they are required of us for the same reason that the washing in the Jordan was required of Naaman, and that in the Pool of Siloam was required of the blind man, as means whereby we may show our faith, and in showing our faith receive GOD's grace. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this matter; if we believe CHRIST's words we shall keep His ordinances; if we do not keep CHRIST's ordinances we do not believe His words. Do not let us *talk* about being saved by faith; it is very true CHRIST would save us if we had faith; but if we do not believe His words we have not faith, and shall no more be saved than Naaman would have been cured had he washed in Pharpar or Abana, or the blind man had he not washed at all.

We have seen that there are many outward means of grace, and that the true believer will not neglect any of them, knowing that with every help that GOD has given and the Church offers, he can do no more than painfully work out his own salvation, keep his faith sound, and his obedience true; still the Church has not taken upon herself to pronounce any of them necessary to salvation, except those two which CHRIST Himself has made necessary conditions of salvation. When you are asked how many sacraments CHRIST has ordained in

His Church, you are taught to say, "two only, *as generally necessary* to salvation, Baptism and the Supper of the LORD." CHRIST has been pleased to make these two acts the signs of our being or not being in covenant with Him; if we do them we are in covenant, if we do them not we are not in covenant.

Let us see what we mean by this word Sacrament. The Epistles, you know, were written in Greek, and the Greek word which they use to signify what we call Sacraments is the word Mystery. The clergy to whom they were intrusted are called Stewards of the Mysteries of God. Now the Greeks, who had all their lives been accustomed to hear of the mysteries of Isis and the mysteries of Eleusis, understood readily what was meant by that word; that is to say, the highest act of religion to which the faithful only were admitted—but to the Romans it did not convey so clear a meaning, because their religion was different: to render it clear to the minds of that military nation, the word *Sacramentum* was used by the Church instead of the corresponding word Mystery, which we find in the Scripture, and which has always been used, and is used to this day by the Eastern Church. We are apt to consider the word Sacrament to signify a *sacred* thing because the words sacred and sacrament sound something alike. They are alike in sound only; the word *sacramentum* really does mean the oath of allegiance which was taken by the Roman soldier on his entrance into the army, which afterwards was renewed at stated periods. This used to be called *Sacramentum*, and in the Roman army was signified by the outward and visible sign of stretching forth the hand at the time of taking the oath. You may imagine how vividly this pictured to the minds of a warlike people, the oath by which they swore themselves to be CHRIST's faithful soldiers and servants in Baptism, as we find it in the Baptismal Service to this day, and the renewal of it at the LORD's Supper, whereby the Church Militant prepares herself for battle against the enemies of the great Captain of its salvation.

The reason why there are two Sacraments is that they

show two different things. Baptism is for the remission of sins—which is aptly signified by washing—but “there is but one Baptism for the remission of sins,” therefore we are washed but once. Sin after Baptism is put away only in the sense in which Nathan told David, the LORD had put away his sin, that is to say, it was put away, provided he amended his future life. The consequences remained, and the former sin would be reckoned at the Day of Judgment had David again fallen into it. As therefore there is no farther remission, so the sign of washing off is never more repeated. The bread and wine is a sign of strengthening. Now “bread and wine is the outward part or sign of the LORD’s Supper.”

“What is the inward part or thing signified?” “It is the Body and Blood of CHRIST which are verily and indeed taken and received in the LORD’s Supper”—verily and indeed taken, and received. I beg you to mark those words, because the great and dangerous error of the present times is to regard it as a mere sign, memorial, or form. Verily and indeed taken—our SAVIOUR says, *This is My Body*—and S. Paul explains it, “the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST? the bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of CHRIST?”

The Roman Catholics err by trying to be wise above what is written, and thus, whatever they intend,<sup>1</sup> they really do so mystify themselves, that most of their flocks do believe in the actual corporeal presence of CHRIST at the Holy Communion. They say that after consecration the bread and wine no longer remain, but are changed into the Body and Blood of CHRIST, while certain sects of Protestants err in believing no presence

<sup>1</sup> The Roman Catholics profess to regard “substance” in a technical sense only, as signifying that “quod substat,” after everything visible, tangible, or in any way perceptible to the senses, is removed from it. These qualities they technically term “accidents.” All this may be quite orthodox to learned men, but what we have to do with is the sense in which unlearned men actually do receive it.



of CHRIST at all. The Romish doctrine would be a comfortable and a reverent doctrine were it possible to believe it against the evidence of our senses, but it is almost as clear to us that the bread and wine is not changed in substance, as it must have been to the Apostles themselves, when our Blessed SAVIOUR standing in His human body before their sight said, pointing to the bread in His hand, This is My Body. How the Protestant Dissenters can consider it merely a memorial, with the plain words of CHRIST before their eyes, Whoso eateth this bread shall never die—This Bread is My Body—Whoso eateth Me shall live by Me,—I cannot tell you, nor by what ingenuity they cheat themselves out of their own privileges: but this is certain,—this low view of the blessed Sacrament produces that carelessness about it which we see so often, and the consequent withdrawing of God's grace leaves us in the state described by the Apostle, wherein, merely for want of something to steady us, we are "tossed about by every wind of doctrine." I should not have noticed these errors (as my object is to point out what is right, not what is wrong) only that they will afford us a means of coming to a right understanding of that very difficult doctrine, the real presence of CHRIST in the Holy Communion.

The Scripture is, This is My Body—and there are three interpretations put upon it. The Romanists say it means, This is literally and actually My Body. The Protestant Dissenters say it means, This is a likeness of My Body—and like any other picture or image will bring it solemnly to your remembrance. The Church says it means, "This is to all intents and purposes My Body,"—that is, it will impart to you the same interests purchased by My death, as if I literally made My flesh your flesh.

Suppose in common life I were to point to a range of country, and say, "This is your property," I use the term in the same sense as that in which the Romanists use the term, "This is My Body."

If I point to a picture representing that same country,



and therefore calling it to your mind, and say, "This is your property," meaning the picture or representation which calls to mind your property, I use the term in the sense which the Dissenters apply to that difficult passage. But if I point to the title-deeds by which that property is held, which are all the while parchment, and nothing but parchment,—but which still remaining what they are, do give you real and actual possession of the land, —and say, "This is your property," then I use the sense the Church puts on it. The bread and wine, though all the time they are but bread and wine, and nothing else, are the only title-deeds we have to show for claiming a joint property in CHRIST's heavenly nature.

I have heard people talk about this being the putting the Sacrament instead of the SAVIOUR. You do not put the cup in the stead of the liquor, still it is perfectly true that without the former you cannot carry the latter to your own lips, or in any way profit by it. You do not put the channel of the river in the stead of the water, yet it is not less certain that without the channel the water will be dispersed and will not reach you.<sup>1</sup> So you do not put the Sacraments in the place of CHRIST, —CHRIST, and CHRIST alone, gives you His grace,—but He makes the Sacraments the means by which He conveys it to you.

If I am asked the question, Can a man be saved who, where they may be had, rejects the Sacraments?—awful as the consideration is in the present state of the Church, still the warning must be given,—I should say, as a general rule, certainly not. That God may take into

<sup>1</sup> I preached this sermon on board the "S. Vincent," having had a passage given me in her during one of her experimental cruises some years ago. I was afterwards talking to one of the men, who did not fully take in the bearing of my shore-going illustrations. I made him however fully understand the doctrine of being saved by the Sacraments in this way: If you are overboard, and a man heaves you a rope, and you lay hold of it, you are saved by the rope—you are saved because you lay hold of it, but he who saves you is the man who hove it: so in spiritual matters you are saved by the Sacraments, you are saved because you receive them; but He who saves you is the Blessed LORD Who gave them to you.

consideration sins committed in ignorance or in prejudice, is possible,—that He will take into consideration, for His Son's sake, any extenuating circumstances that can be urged, is most certain,—but as a rule, as a thing to look to and be guided by, I do not see how a man can be saved who wilfully neglects the LORD's Supper. He *has* no faith, that is evident: no one who has faith can neglect a thing instituted by CHRIST Himself. He is just in the condition of Adam: a slight act is required of him, the use of which he possibly does not see, but he is required to do it, merely because it was commanded by CHRIST; it is a trial of faith, and he fails in it. Why should he have the reward due to those who have kept the faith? The words of CHRIST are as plain as words can be made,—“Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you,”—and the Church takes it up and tells you in the Catechism that it is *generally* necessary to salvation; and if we return to the examples already spoken of, they still bear us out. Can a man claim the possession of property unless he have the title-deeds?

That CHRIST might have sent His grace in fifty different ways, is most true; but He did choose to send it in that, and depend upon it, when we esteem lightly what CHRIST puts a value upon, we despise CHRIST, and shall no more receive His grace than would Naaman had he washed in the Pharpar, or than did Moses when he *struck* the rock which GOD commanded him to *speak* to.

But there is another class of men who also miss the grace,—those who come lightly and carelessly to the Holy Table. Foolish and inconsiderate people have said that they did not see that some neighbour of theirs who did go to the Communion was better than they who did not; they forget that the Sacrament is an inward spiritual grace as well as an outward form,—that it must be eaten in faith; he, therefore, who goes to that Table without faith, receives the Body and Blood of CHRIST no doubt, but he receives it not to his soul's health, but to his own damnation. Outwardly, there is no difference between him and his neighbour; inwardly, there is the same differ-

ence as there is between taking food and taking poison.<sup>1</sup> Depend upon it, as a general rule, neither they who receive unworthily (i.e., unfaithfully), nor they who do not receive it at all, can be saved, and both for the very same reason,—because they have no faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God.

There is danger, you will say, in receiving the Holy Communion, and death in neglecting; if we eat not, we have no life in us,—if we eat unworthily, we eat and drink our own damnation. What are we to do? What!—why eat *worthily*, to be sure. Look at the last answer in the Catechism, and tell me if you hope or expect salvation on lower grounds than those of repenting truly of your former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, and having a lively faith in God's mercy through CHRIST,—the very repentance, faith, and obedience which we have been considering all along, which were promised for you at your Baptism, and without which you will not see God, whether you do receive the Holy Communion, or whether you do not.

To those who come with faithful and trusting hearts, the LORD holds out the highest privileges. They perform their promises, and they come here to claim those which God has made on His part. They are therefore no longer in their own strength; their souls are strength-

<sup>1</sup> A remarkable illustration of the doctrine that the things which should have been for our wealth may be to us an occasion of falling, taking the doctrine in its physical sense, occurred when I was a boy, at the little village of Milford, near Godalming. A man, from some chronic disease or other, had been recommended by his physician vinegar and water, to be taken in certain quantities periodically, which he did for some time to the benefit of his health. A quack on one occasion recommended him to swallow a charge of small shot, by no means an uncommon remedy among the poor for indigestion. He did so, and taking shortly afterwards his accustomed dose of vinegar and water, the vinegar combined with the lead and produced a sort of Goulard water in his stomach, an active poison, of which he died, as was proved afterwards at the coroner's inquest. That which was his *remedy* became by his own folly the cause of his death. And spiritually, if *with the sop* the devil entered into Judas, though that sop was only the cup of the Old Testament at the beginning of the Paschal Feast, how much more readily will he not enter into us, when we with a like guilty conscience have received the cup of the New Testament at the completion of that Feast. It is *that on which we have received it* that has turned our wealth into an occasion of falling.

ened and refreshed by the Body and Blood of CHRIST as their bodies are by the bread and wine ; they are one with CHRIST—in His strength they overcome their enemies,—the world, the flesh, and the devil ; with Him they lead captivity captive, and break off the bondage of sin ; in His strength they keep the promises of their Baptism and Confirmation. They have faith, they have obedience ; and, if these perchance should fail, they have repentance, which through His merits will be accepted. With Him they have been buried in Baptism ; with Him they will rise again with their bodies, will ascend whither He has ascended, and will “ meet their LORD in the air.”

“ O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt ? ”

## INFANT BAPTISM.

IN the neighbouring town of Emsworth, is situated a conventicle of Baptists, as they are popularly denominated, that is to say, of Anabaptists, their distinctive doctrine being the re-baptism of their converts.

It so happens that the leaders of this sect are very energetic painstaking people, and I really believe sincere according to their knowledge. Their peculiar ideas, therefore, are for the present the prevailing form of dissent in the place.

Had they confined themselves to their own parish, I should certainly have left them to be dealt with by their own Parson and his assistants; but, far too zealous to be restrained by parochial limits, they have from time to time seduced religious, but weak-headed persons, from Westbourne, into the sacrilege of a second baptism, for which sin I trust God will forgive them on account of their ignorance, and me for not having sufficiently enlightened them.

On the occasion of a Confirmation held at Westbourne, these Baptists contrived to secrete among the pews numbers of their tracts, and, the stratagem having been detected by the sexton, they distributed the remainder among the school children.

Upon this it was that I wrote the following letter. And I really did, perhaps a little from whim, put the tracts thus supplied my school, to the use I mention, and thus the children, in a very few days, learned to refute their errors. But the practice not being very edifying, was soon discontinued, and the books were torn, lost, or burnt.



Most clergymen know what Baptist Tracts are, and are perhaps surprised that they produce any effect at all, displaying as they do such an immense amount of ignorance, and such utter disregard of truth; but people are very apt to measure the intellects of others by their own, and to forget that a roundly-asserted falsehood is truth to those who are unable to controvert it, and confident ignorance is learning and knowledge to those who are themselves too ignorant to detect the fallacy.

#### TO THE ANABAPTISTS OF EMSWORTH.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I like to see people earnest and zealous in their belief, be that belief what it may; I think it is a very good sign, and I had rather by half that they should be what the world calls bigoted, and stand up stoutly for their belief, than be what the world calls liberal, and keep shifting about between church and meeting-house, faithful to neither, and therefore a disgrace to both.

If you are in earnest, of course you will be trying to make converts. You are quite right in so doing. If you honestly think that people cannot be saved by believing what the Church teaches, if you really think that you and your friends know a great deal better than all those wise men she has brought forth, if you are sure that they are in the wrong way, and you and your friends in the right, I cannot blame you for trying to make converts. The only thing I wonder at is, that God should have concealed these things for so many years from such holy and such wise men, and should have revealed them to you.

Still I think that you ought to make your converts fairly and openly; we do not hold that the end sanctifies the means, and though it may be quite right for you to make converts, I doubt whether hiding your tracts in the pews of my church, or distributing them among the children of my school, can be considered a holy, honourable, or even honest means for gaining such an end.

You have, however, done me no great deal of harm, the books you hid in the church I employed to catechize out of on the subject of baptism, and very useful books they were, for they pointed out the mistakes which others had made, and taught the children how to avoid them.

Perhaps you would like to see the use I made of your tracts. I will therefore take the last one which you have lately distributed among my school children ; it is called the " Baptists' Concordance."

The children brought it to me, and asked what they were to do with it. I showed them how to make it a very useful little book, by employing it as I am doing now, as a text book on " Infant Baptism."

Perhaps I may make it useful to you. Let us try.

Whenever you begin arguing you ought first to make yourself sure of the doctrines held by your adversary, else you may throw away a great deal of very good argument to very little purpose.

You are not quite right in saying that there was no mention made of baptism in the Old Testament, because you ought to know that the Old Testament contains types of every thing found in the New. You ought to have known that the whole race of Israel was baptized, as S. Paul tells you, in the Red Sea,—men, women, and *children*, alike.

However it is perfectly true as you say that S. John, that our SAVIOUR, that the Holy Apostles did baptize grown-up people, and did require believing and confessing their sins as a first necessary step, and I will go even beyond you, and say, that those who, like Simon, received it without so doing, received it to the very great hurt and danger of their souls.

But the Church teaches this very same thing ; if I had to baptize a grown-up person, and were to baptize him without first fully satisfying myself, and my Bishop also, of his faith, I should not only be committing a very great sin, but incurring also a very heavy punishment from the Church.

You and I therefore are at one upon this point. The only thing that I complain of you here is, that in argu-

ing against the Church, you would lead your friends to believe that we hold a very wicked doctrine, which, in truth, we do not hold any more than you.

But here comes a difficulty, which I think you and your friends will not find it easy to get rid of; there is no doubt that he who is old enough to believe, and does believe, and is baptized, is saved; there is no doubt of this, because our SAVIOUR has said so. But how if he die before he is old enough to believe? surely you will not say that he is damned? and yet, unless you have any downright promise from our SAVIOUR, I do not see how you can help saying so. We are all born in wrath, and until we are made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, we must all continue in that state in which we were born. What will you do to get out of this difficulty?

This is the real point of difference between the Church and you. The Church knows she has a promise from her LORD that infants shall be saved, and you cannot see that promise.

The promise is, "SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME, AND FORBID THEM NOT, FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

Now you cannot see that that is a promise. You think that our SAVIOUR is merely declaring His good will to them. That comes of not considering the circumstances under which our SAVIOUR spoke these words.

It is a very common mistake to take the Bible for a book of rules, given us from heaven, to form our religion by. Our religion was given us by CHRIST Himself. It was given, we are told, by word of mouth unto the Apostles whom He had chosen during those forty days, when, as the Bible says, He was seen of them "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Upon this, not upon the Bible, the Apostles founded the Church. The New Testament is a record of things done, and a series of explanations when things had not been understood, and of admonitions when they had been left undone; it was not written till many years afterwards. We judge from it how the Apostles acted

upon what our SAVIOUR told them during those forty days, and how they taught, and what they did: but as the Bible is not a book of rules, it does not at all follow that a thing, of which there is but little mention made in it, is therefore a thing of little importance. Is there one single word in the New Testament about keeping the LORD's day? It only shows that the people, when they heard it, understood it readily, and that the Apostles had but little occasion to explain it. Now this baptism of infants was just one of those things that these people would understand readily, because it was one of those things that was by no means strange to them.

They were themselves already in covenant with God, and they and their children had been taken into that covenant long before they were old enough to understand it. Isaac, you recollect, was circumcised, and made one of GOD's chosen people *when he was only eight days old*, and so were all those whom our SAVIOUR was preaching to. Our SAVIOUR was offering them a new covenant, containing new blessings besides the old; He was giving them a new form for entering it, but the covenant was very much the same sort of covenant as that to which the Jew had been accustomed, who, when he entered into the new one, very naturally thought that his children, who had been partakers in the old before they could understand, should be partakers in the new one also. Therefore they brought young children to CHRIST, that He should bless them; but His disciples, who had not been long chosen, and who were as yet but half acquainted with the nature of their Master's kingdom, seemed to have thought, like you, that it was necessary for them to understand and to do something, before GOD would give them His grace, "they rebuked those that brought them." (I do not know anything harder to understand than that GOD's grace is His free gift, and is not given us as a reward for understanding, or doing anything else.) "But when JESUS saw it, He was much displeased, [that His own disciples should have profited so little from His teaching,] and said,

Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

Now remember that our SAVIOUR always uses that term kingdom to signify the Church. What He does say, therefore, is, that the Church is made up of such as these,—that is, such as children. Now baptism is the entrance into the Church, and the only entrance that we know. And can you suppose that by these words He denies them entrance into the Church, which He says particularly is made up of such as these are? Would not the Jewish child lose a great blessing by his father becoming a disciple of our SAVIOUR, if this were the case? The Jewish child was in covenant with God by circumcision,—that is certain; but if he was not to be in the Christian covenant by baptism, he would lose the one without gaining the other.

But it is not so.

When our SAVIOUR said, Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein, He received little children into that kingdom. When He took them up in His arms, laid His hands upon them, and blessed them, He gave them, we may be sure, no less a privilege than they had enjoyed before as Jews.

But in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles we hear little more about this. Of course, disciples, Jews, all His hearers, in fact, understood it fully, and acted upon it. They wanted no further explanation; all that had been given them ages ago, in the days when Isaac was circumcised, *being eight days old*, they understood at once that God's grace now, as heretofore, was free.

How do I know they acted upon it? Did not S. Paul baptize the *household* of Stephanas? and will you tell me that Stephanas had no children? Was not the jailor at Philippi baptized with his whole house? It would be a bold thing to say that there was not a child in that house. I will venture to say that there was not a household in the Roman dominions without children in it, because the slaves who were part of the



household married, and still lived in the house and brought up their children in the house as well as their masters and mistresses. S. Paul says simply, that he baptized the household; he does not give himself the trouble of saying the household *and children*, because every Jew to whom he was writing had been circumcised himself as a child. If he had not meant that, he would certainly have expressed himself in some such way as this,—I baptized the whole household of Stephanas who were over fourteen and were able to understand my preaching.

This was the custom of the Apostles while they lived, and this was the custom of the Church after they were dead. How do I know this, you will say? Upon precisely the same grounds as those on which the author of your tract says that the baptism of infants was not introduced till the third century; I know it from the Council of Carthage. Very much afraid I am that he was deceiving you intentionally, when he said that it was in the third century that that custom was introduced. If it were so, the matter would be perfectly set at rest; no doctrine introduced in the third century could be true doctrine, because no doctrine can be true which does not proceed from CHRIST or His inspired Apostles. But it is not so; the Council of Carthage held in the third century was the first time when infant baptism was *talked about*; I will tell you how that was, and then leave you to judge, from the way in which it was mentioned, whether it was then a new thing.

Children among the Christians used then to be baptized at the age at which, among the Jews, they had been circumcised, that is to say, the eighth day after their birth; but as children did die under a week old, and as baptism was always looked upon as the entrance into the kingdom of heaven, parents were anxious, and not without reason, about what would become of their children if they died before they were eight days old; and, therefore, when the council was met together at Carthage, the subject was brought before them, not whether infants might be baptized or not, but whether

they might be baptized earlier than the age of eight days. Now I think you will agree with me that this proves pretty evidently that there was no doubt about baptizing children then in any part of CHRIST's Church; it would be of no great use to consider whether they might be baptized at an earlier age than eight days, if before that they had not been baptized at all.

This then is what I assert, that infant baptism is a command of CHRIST, given in the fourteenth verse of the tenth chapter of S. Mark's Gospel, which command we might or might not have overlooked had it stood alone; but that if we compare it with the practice of the Church from the beginning down to our days, it is impossible to misunderstand it.

Yes, but your tract says that they were dipped, and not sprinkled, or as you call it, somewhat learnedly, rhantized. You produce exactly a hundred instances in which the word baptism occurs, but there is not one where rhantism is used; if you had looked at the hundred and first, (S. Mark vii. 4,) you would have seen that you had translated the word wrongly, and that if baptism does not mean sprinkling, neither does it mean dipping. Who ever heard of the *dipping* of cups and platters—*washing* is the word—and washing is the meaning of baptism, whether that washing is done by dipping or by sprinkling. But you say that dipping is the more proper way of baptizing; so do I, and so does the Church. Do read your own Prayer Book before you find fault with the Church, and see whether the Church does not tell you to do that very thing which you find fault with her for not doing; see whether the fault does not lie in you, and not in the Church. This is what the Church says, “and then naming it after them, (if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it) he shall DIP it in the water discreetly and warily, but if they certify the child is weak, it *shall suffice* to pour water upon it.”

Now, then, if rhantizing, as you call it, is practised with your children, instead of dipping, whose fault is it? Try, demand of your parish Priest, after due notice

given, that he baptize your child by dipping, and see if he dares refuse to do it.

But you say CHRIST never appointed godfathers and godmothers: very true; but neither does the Church: as a matter of doctrine, she has no right to do so. Therefore it is that she has ordained, that there shall be one service for baptism, in which there are no godfathers or godmothers. She thinks it a very proper thing, no doubt, to require security that the child or the person she admits should be properly taught; and therefore, just as you do not admit new members into a club without a proposer and seconder, she requires sureties; but when these are not to be had, then she permits the other service to be used; and I never heard that baptism was a bit the less baptism for want of the godfathers and godmothers.

You see, then, that in fact, two-thirds of your supposed difference from the Church, is no difference at all,—that it is a mistake of your own, arising simply from your not having read your Prayer Book. While the only real difference between us, viz., that *besides* baptizing grown persons, we suffer little children *also* to come to CHRIST, arises from your not having read the Bible with sufficient attention.

And now see the situation in which you have placed yourselves; either you must be right and the Church wrong, or you must be wrong and the Church right. If it should so be that all the Church is wrong on this subject, and that you alone are right, all that we have done is to put a larger interpretation on one of our SAVIOUR'S promises, not than the words will bear, but than our SAVIOUR meant us to put. And if this is done in ignorance and in faith, we have every reason to suppose that our LORD will pardon us. But if, on the other hand, it should so happen that all the Church is right, and you wrong, then see what you have done. You have slighted a grace which your LORD has given you—you have endangered, perhaps seriously injured, the souls of your own children; you have broken one, and *not* of the least of your Master's commandments, and

have taught men so; and thus, by His own word, you have become the least in the kingdom of heaven; and, whereas that Master prayed that all His disciples might be one, as He was one with the FATHER, and you have made His word of none effect by causing a division in His Church, you have gone against His prayers. This is the situation in which you *may* have placed yourselves, and all this will have arisen from going on in the light of your own private judgment, instead of following humbly the Tradition of the Universal Church.

Your well wisher and Friend,

HENRY NEWLAND.

## LECTURE ON THE COMMUNION SERVICE,

DELIVERED ON THE WEEK PRECEDING THE CELEBRATION.

It is more necessary to give some rules about the behaviour of a congregation at the celebration of a Holy Communion, because the Prayer Book itself gives so few.—In this above all our other Services we ought, as S. Paul teaches us, to let all things be done decently and in order, and yet we find that in the office for Holy Communion there is much less said than in any other service about when we are to kneel, when to stand, what parts are to be said aloud by both priest and people, what parts by the priest alone. Most likely the reason for this is, that as this service was the earliest published in the English, it was not thought necessary to tell the people how to behave, because they were all supposed to know,—they were to do exactly what they had always been used to do, except when some change was particularly ordered in the service. But now in course of time the old rules have been so much forgotten, that you will hardly find two congregations who behave at all in the same way, nay, it is perhaps not too much to say, that there are not usually ten persons in a congregation who behave in one manner, except when some pains have been taken to give instruction about it. This may perhaps seem a little thing to speak about, and yet, if any of you remark it, you will soon find that it does give much life and earnestness to our worship, when we all speak out in our right turn, all stand and kneel at one and the same time. I believe the reason



of this to be the peculiar grace promised by CHRIST to the two (or of course more) agreeing upon earth; at all events it is so, men do help one another, and there is always more devoutness in a church in which they are all devout in the same manner.

But whatever you do, remember always that these things are but a means to an end. The chief thing for you to keep in mind through all the service in the Holy Communion is, that CHRIST is present; let every act be something done to worship Him,—not a mere form to be gone through because the Church orders it, but let every look and word and motion be meant to show honour to Him. Let our worship come from hearts that cannot help adoring with all lowliness and awful gladness, because they feel that the King of angels is here. Every time we kneel to pray let it be as sinners bowing at His feet Who is pure from all stain,—every time we *stand* to praise, let it be with the deepest reverence, as if we knew well that when we stand we stand in the strength of Him whom we are praising: our praise then should be spoken as unto the ear of CHRIST, gladly, as if we could not but burst out with thanksgiving, humbly, because our unclean lips are all unfit to join the songs of the blessed spirits round His throne.

Now if you will open your Prayer Books, I will go through the different parts of the Service with you.

The first thing which you will observe is a rule, that so many as intend to be partakers of the Holy Communion shall signify their names to the curate at least some time the day before. Curate here means the priest who has the chief care of the parish. This is a rule which is not enforced, but it is a very good one, and might be very useful to any who wish to find an opportunity for speaking privately to their clergyman, and who have any doubt whether they ought or ought not to come to this holy Sacrament. He can apply to your consciences and to your own particular cases the rubric that follows, and will guard you if it be necessary from doing hurt to yourselves by not discerning the LORD'S Body, of which you are desirous to partake.

If you look attentively to the directions in the service itself, there is a peculiarity which cannot fail to strike you. In all other places in which the LORD'S Prayer occurs, the priest is directed to say it "with an audible voice, the people kneeling and repeating it with" him,—here not only he says it alone, but the people are not to say Amen to it as they do at all other prayers, for the Amen being written in the same character as the rest of the prayers, indicates that it is not a response, but that it is to be said by him who says the prayer.

This has its meaning. Prayer, and praise, even confession may be made in common by the Christian body, but grace is received, as the manna was gathered, by each individual Christian for himself. The LORD'S Prayer is the foundation of all prayer, this service therefore would be imperfect without it; but in the Service instituted for the reception of grace, each man makes it for himself. Having received each one of us our portion, we then thank God *together*, feeling that if he that has gathered much has nothing over, yet he that has gathered little has no lack. We thank God *together* for that, which though received individually, is a blessing to all; and when we repeat the LORD'S Prayer, then the people are especially directed to "repeat after the Priest *every petition*." Those who complain of the repetition of the LORD'S Prayer in this Service do it through ignorance—the words may be repeated, the idea is not. We first pray for our daily bread, our spiritual daily bread in this instance, according to our respective needs, and for the advancement of His kingdom in our hearts; this therefore we do each man for himself; having obtained this, we then pray in common that we may not hinder it from *being* our daily bread, but that in helping one another, and edifying one another, and working with God for our own and our neighbour's advancement in common holiness, we may set forward the coming of His kingdom.

At the end of the Collect following, the Amen is written in a different way: this indicates that he who

says the prayer is to stop at the end of it, and let others make it their own by saying to it the Amen.

You may easily see the meaning of this Collect. We are about to receive CHRIST within our hearts. What would be the consequence of receiving within us Him to whom "all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid," if the thoughts of those hearts had not been before cleansed by the "inspiration of His HOLY SPIRIT?"

The rehearsing of the Commandments by the priest is a preparation for the confession which we shall come to presently, and I have already shown you how to make it so; if you have thought over your past life for the last month or so before you come to Church, with the paper of questions which I have given you for self-examination, the mere repeating of God's words by God's ambassadors will be quite sufficient to recall it.

Then comes the special prayer for the week, the Collect, and after that you rise from your knees to hear the special lesson upon which that prayer is founded, the epistle and gospel. The creed, or general confession of faith, which we make immediately after that, is intended to remind us, that though these particular passages of Scripture may bring before us more strongly this or that point of our faith, yet that no *one* of them all is sufficient for our salvation,—that we believe in all, and all alike; in GOD the FATHER who made, in GOD the SON who redeemed, in GOD the HOLY GHOST who sanctifieth. Having heard and joined in this general confession of Faith, the priest without scruple proceeds to enlarge upon some one particular portion of it, generally that suggested by the epistle and gospel for the day, in what we call the sermon: that is the meaning of the word "then"—*then*, the people having declared their belief in all the articles of the Christian Faith, the priest shall explain one of them.

We then offer our alms to GOD. This we should do standing, though we may kneel when we are actually making our offering: we do this now, because we are just going to offer to Him a sacrifice, that of "our-

selves, our souls and bodies," we would give an earnest that we are ready to be fellow-workers with Him in His works of mercy; and with these we offer also our oblations, anything that is destined for the service of God; for it is the same thing whether we offer to CHRIST directly, or to CHRIST through His poor. Among these oblations are the bread and wine which are to become the outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace: it is ordinary bread and common wine, such as might at any other time strengthen and refresh our bodies, as the LORD fed the five thousand with that which He took from *among them*, as the LORD preserves all His faithful to eternal life by that which He took from *their own immortality*.

Then, having prepared ourselves individually, we begin our act of communion together by praying for the whole state of CHRIST's Church Militant here on earth, for all who in common with ourselves are still undergoing their trials. This should be said, like all other prayers, kneeling.

But you stand at the words, "Dearly beloved in the LORD," for here the priest is giving you the final warning, that which again points out to you that you are not doing a thing which may benefit but cannot injure, but one of which "as the blessing is great so is the danger great also." This final warning is an old custom, almost as old as the Apostles, the deacon always used to warn those who were excommunicated either by their own sentence or that of the Church, to retire at this time; and this is the fittest time for those who have not yet been admitted into full Communion, or who have excommunicated themselves, to withdraw from the presence of God.

The next exhortation is to the faithful only, and they are told to draw near with faith. In many churches they do actually draw near after the rest are gone, and assemble in the chancel, and in the body of the church. This is very much better than remaining scattered in their own seats: the more we gather ourselves together the more we shall feel that we are all one family met in our FATHER's house, all coming with the same weak na-



ture, to be fed and nourished with the one Bread of Life.

But we are not only to draw near, we are to make our confession. The value of this confession will depend very much upon the use we have made of our time for preparation, and the awaking of our consciences when we listened to the rehearsal of God's commandments: it should be made on our knees, because it is a humble confession made by sinners to an Almighty God; it should be made aloud and together, because we are making it as a family to a common FATHER. You cannot be too humble and earnest in thus telling out your thoughts to God,—the greater your shame the more hope of His mercy.

After this prayer the priest or the bishop stands up and turns to the people. Before this he had been turning away from them, because he and they together were all speaking to God, all accusing themselves of their offences, all looking to God alone for pity and forgiveness, but now the priest turns round as God's ambassador to proclaim the gospel or good tidings with which he has been entrusted, now he brings a message from God to the people, he cheers them with a promise of pardon from a heavenly FATHER. Bow your heads low at these words of mercy, and listen to them as if they were a voice from God Himself. Forget the minister—he is not speaking of himself, but declaring to you what God has put into his mouth. Drink in every word he utters with thirsty ears, apply it in your mind to those sins of which you are conscious, and devoutly believe that if you are truly penitent you are forgiven. And so be thankful.

“*Then* shall the Priest say.” Mark the value of this word “*then*,”—it means then, after you have grieved over your sins, after you have confessed them, after you have received God's message of pardon sent by His minister, *then* you may listen with comfort to such sentences as these: they are not meant to be taken generally, they are addressed to you only. He shows you your SAVIOUR's mercy.



That the LORD refreshes them that are heavy laden.

That the LORD came into the world that we sinners should have everlasting life.

That the LORD has ascended to the FATHER to plead for us and be our Advocate.

He then tells you to lift up your hearts, that is to be joyful, to cast your care away: you join him—you say you are joyful—he then reminds you Whom you have to thank for this; and when you admit it and say you are ready to thank God, he turns—for hitherto he had been speaking to you—he turns to God and speaks in your name; and while you kneel behind him and listen to him doing it, he offers up his and your thanksgiving, adding them to those of the “Angels and Archangels, and all the company of heaven.” Do not forget Elisha in Dothan; how he told his follower that “they that are with us are more than they that are with them,” and then that the LORD opened His servant’s eyes, and he saw the whole mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about them. All the heavenly servants of CHRIST, as our LORD is there, throng around Him to do Him honour, and, with them, “we laud and magnify His glorious Name, evermore praising Him, and saying”—Here at these words all should join in lifting up their voices with awe to raise one song both for angels and men, saying out loud, “Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory, glory be to Thee, O LORD Most High. Amen.”

“Woe is me,” said Isaiah, after he had seen such a vision, “for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the LORD of Hosts.” It is with some such feeling that the Priest again kneels down at the altar and acknowledges, in the name of himself and his people, that we are none of us fit to receive so great a blessing as the Holy Communion, but prays that God in His mercy will grant that we may “so eat the Flesh of His dear SON JESUS CHRIST and drink His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious Blood,

and that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us." Follow this prayer with all your soul, and apply it to yourselves with a hearty "Amen" at the end.

Now comes the most solemn part of all the service—the Prayer of Consecration. Now it is that the bread is broken and the cup is blessed, as S. Paul teaches us, to be the Communion of the Body and Blood of CHRIST. Now it is that CHRIST by His word and power works the miracle of making the Bread and Wine the means by which we feed on Him, eat His Flesh and drink His Blood. Now every earnest communicant should plead the Sacrifice of CHRIST before God, beseeching the FATHER to look on the memorial of His SON's wounded Body, and, for the sake of the death and passion of the LORD JESUS, to hear and to forgive us. All our thoughts should be fixed on the sacred Body broken on the Cross for us, and that precious Blood streaming from His side to cleanse us.

At the end of the consecration, when the words, "This is My Body, this is My Blood," have been said, let us fill our minds with the remembrance of all the SAVIOUR's acts of love; let us worship and adore CHRIST our LORD with the most loving devotion of body and soul, saying to ourselves some such words as these, "I adore thee, O LORD JESUS CHRIST, God from everlasting in the bosom of the FATHER. I adore Thee made man, in the Virgin's womb for me. I adore Thee in Thy great love living on earth, tempted and suffering for my sake. I adore Thee hanging on the Cross even to the death, to take away my sins. I adore Thee buried, rising again, conquering the grave. I adore Thee ascended into heaven, seated in glory, sending down the Spirit. I adore Thee, Holy Son of God, here present amongst us, and with all humility of soul and body I cast myself down and bow before Thy Majesty."

After this the priest and other ministers will receive the Holy Communion. Be sure you pray for them that God may pour into them all His graces. While you are waiting to go up to the Holy Table remain humbly kneeling upon your knees. Do not waste this time, for

you may make it most precious to yourselves and others. This is not the time for thinking of our sins, these let us hope we have thought of and repented, and confessed in the earlier part of the service. You need not think of them just now, because we have just received God's message of forgiveness for them. Your occupation now should be returning meet thanks for this; thanking God, as He would be thanked, with your lives rather than your lips. Hitherto your thoughts have been on your past lives: now turn them to your future; make good resolutions of amendment, not *general* resolutions, but say, I will do this or that particular thing, and I will begin to-morrow or to-day: do this just as you are preparing to receive the grace of God, and He will put a seal on your resolution and enable you to keep it.

When can you expect that God will be so ready to hear as when His Church is solemnly pleading before Him the merits of the Sacrifice of CHRIST, through Whom, and for Whose sake it is that we receive all that we have? When your turn is come to receive, go up to the Holy Table with the deepest reverence, like one going up to the very throne of CHRIST. Your LORD and King is there, you cannot see Him, but He sees you. Do all as if you felt His eye upon you, kneel down on the steps, and remember that CHRIST is about to come into your soul. Think what you are, how unworthy of such love, how sinful, what an unspeakable favour that the SON of God should dwell in your heart to make it clean. What joy for you if you repent, that CHRIST will know every fault in you and will purge it out.

When the Priest comes to you he will say, "The Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life." Here answer softly, "Amen." "Take and eat this in remembrance that CHRIST died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." Listen devoutly to these words of promise, and then open your hand, that the precious gift may be laid reverently upon it. This is the rule given us by a Bishop of the Church. "Come not," he says, "with thy fingers open, but make

thy left hand as it were a throne for thy right, which is just going to receive the King. Receive the Body of CHRIST into thy palm, giving heed lest thou lose any of it."

After receiving the bread and the cup, go back to your place, there kneel down until the end of the service. If there are still others receiving, bless and praise God for the gift that is in you. And do not forget to pray for them also.

When all have communicated, and the Priest begins the LORD's Prayer, remember now that you, as Christians in communion with your LORD, and with one another through Him, having all received each one his own portion of grace, desire to use it for the furtherance of God's kingdom, for common benefit, and common edification; pray therefore together and aloud, repeat after him every petition, praying that you may profit jointly by the daily bread you have severally received.

Then in silence attend to the next prayer. It is not only "remission of sins" for which you are praying in behalf of yourselves and those with whom you are in communion, it is "all other benefits of His Passion," it is the *fruits* of the Cross, it is the *manifestation* of the Divine Spirit in the midst of your corrupt nature. Confessing that you are unworthy to offer any sacrifice, you pray Him to accept *this*, which is "your bounden duty and service." You "offer and present to God yourselves, your souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice to God," and having done this with an honest and a faithful heart, you are entitled to lift up your voices together, and give glory to God on high in that hymn which at the birth of CHRIST was begun by the angels of heaven, to be caught up and echoed back again by us on earth whom He came to save.

Then comes the last blessing, which you should hear with your heads bent meekly down, praying that it may indeed bring the peace of God into your hearts.

After this, in your own private collect praise God afresh for His mercies to your souls, ask His pardon for



wandering thoughts and imperfect service, wait quietly in your places till you see the Priest come away from the Holy Table; then return home, thinking with a calm and holy joy how close CHRIST has brought you to Himself. S. John himself, who lay on the bosom of JESUS at His Last Supper, was not nearer to the SAVIOUR, nor more safe in the shelter of His love, than you who have been made one with CHRIST. Lean then upon your SAVIOUR's love, trust firmly in His strength. Be sure that He can keep you from sin, little as you can keep yourselves. He is in you to make your peace with GOD. He has bound you to Himself, that He may pour His life into you, to fill you with holiness and the love of His FATHER. Watch carefully that you do not, by wilful sin, cut yourself off from Him.

And now all of you use this coming week to prepare your souls for CHRIST's Presence. Let nothing make you turn away from this Holy Sacrament. Past sin, if you hate it, need not shut you out, for it is here that CHRIST forgives you. If you are young, and fear that you shall be weak and giddy, of all things do not turn away from CHRIST, for He alone can make you firm and steady against temptation. Never think you can first make yourselves holy, and then come to CHRIST. The very reason why our Blessed LORD left us this Holy Sacrament was because it is only by feeding on Him that we can have life. Without eating His Flesh and Blood, we must fall deeper and deeper into sin. If we will eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, then, as sure as His Word is true, He will dwell in us and be the life of our souls, changing our evil nature into His purity, holding us back from sin, making us to burn with love to GOD, filling us with joy and thankfulness, until His Presence is the one comfort of our days, the open sight of Him in glory the one thing for which we long.



## SERMON AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE FIRST COMMUNION.

“The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of CHRIST?”—1 Cor. x. 16.

LISTEN, my dear brethren, you especially who have just been confirmed, listen with thankfulness and devout love to the words in which God tells you of that blessed and wonderful gift, which you are now going to ask of Him in the Holy Communion. Not only did He give His SON once for all to die for you, but He gives Him again and again to be your “Spiritual Food and Sustenance” in that “Holy Sacrament.” CHRIST’s own promise was, “As the Living FATHER hath sent Me, and I live by the FATHER, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.” CHRIST is one with the FATHER; all the glory, power, and holiness of GOD the FATHER flows into GOD the SON, our Blessed SAVIOUR. All the holiness, strength, and purity of CHRIST flows into the soul that feeds on CHRIST. This is the blessedness promised to him that eateth CHRIST.

Yes, but how shall our souls feed on Him?

He tells us that “He is the bread of life which cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.”

Where then shall we, who are famishing for food, find this true bread to strengthen and refresh us as we struggle against sin?

CHRIST Himself shall tell us again, “The bread that I will give is My Flesh:” “Except ye eat the Flesh of

the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you."

What! are we indeed lost? dead in sin? helpless? without power? without strength to lead a holy life, unless we eat the Flesh and Blood of CHRIST?

Yes, He Who is the Truth declares this.

Once more CHRIST gives us a gracious promise, "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him." What words to be spoken to us poor, sinful, weak creatures—to us who have a thousand times sinned against Him—to us who grieve as we remember that we do sin against Him over and over again; unclean as we are before Him, weak and unworthy, loving Him so poorly—wandering from Him so widely, He calls us to Himself, to dwell in Him, to make Him our home, our refuge from temptation, our safety from the devil; and He, the SON of God, will dwell in us to make us clean from all the spots of past wickedness, to fill us with all holiness. All this CHRIST declares He will do, all these wonders of His love and power, if we will "eat His Flesh and drink His Blood."

But what is His Flesh and Blood?

"JESUS took Bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is My Body; and He took the Cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it, for this is My Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Yes, and we can believe that when JESUS took the Bread and blessed it, He made it to be His Body. He Who fed the five thousand with the five loaves, which were nothing among so many, and yet filled and satisfied all,—He could by the words of His power make the bread which He blessed to be the means by which the souls of His Apostles should feed on Him.

No doubt they who took the bread and the cup from the Hand of CHRIST did eat His Body and drink His Blood. They did verily eat Him and live by Him. But can this be so now? Will CHRIST now come into our souls to give us life and set us free from sin? Now

that He is ascended into Heaven, is not this miracle of His love and power over? Will He give Himself to us? Are His Body and Blood verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the LORD's Supper?

We know to our great joy that they are, for our LORD's command to His Apostles was, "Do this in remembrance of Me." What CHRIST gave once and for the first time to them, they were to give habitually again and again to His disciples, till He should come at last in open and unveiled majesty. Once in the upper chamber, CHRIST blessed and brake, and gave the Bread and Wine to His Apostles; with His one voice He made them to be His Body and Blood, so that all who ate fed on Him. Now CHRIST blesses and breaks by the hands of His ministers. By their word He gives power to His creatures of Bread and Wine, to strengthen and nourish us to everlasting life. Therefore S. Paul says, "The Bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of CHRIST? The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of CHRIST?" This is the mystery, the wonder, the blessing of the Holy Communion, that CHRIST Himself is there.

In this Holy Sacrament we find Him. What we see, what we receive into our mouths, is bread and wine; but faith receives more than these. The soul that trusts the word of CHRIST will know that the Redeemer Himself is present amongst us, that the Bread and Wine is the communion of His Body and Blood. We are sure, from His own promise, that the LORD JESUS comes to us—enters into our souls to dwell there; that there is a COMMUNION between us and Him. He gives us His might, dwells in us, makes Himself a fountain of holiness in us, and takes our weakness unto Himself. He binds us to Himself, that He may take away the sin out of us, to make us like Himself. He nourishes us—works in us to make us free as He is free. To come to the Holy Communion is to come to CHRIST Himself, to open out our hearts before Him, to show Him the sin and death that is in us, and to beg of Him to be our

food, to fill us with Himself, to change us from sin to holiness.

Come, then, you are going out into the world to fulfil the different tasks in it which God has given you according to your several abilities; come and receive strength for your work—you are setting out on the different paths which God has traced out for you through a wide wilderness, which, though the road to Heaven lies through it, bears itself no spiritual sustenance. Come! take food for your journey. Here is the real manna—the true bread from Heaven. Come, gather each one of you his own portion—there is enough for all, much or little, as God sees your work and your trials require much or little—gather it; “he who has much will have nothing over, he who has little will have no lack.”

## THE CHURCH.

ADDRESSED TO THOSE WHO WERE LATELY CATECHUMENS,  
BUT WHO, HAVING BEEN CONFIRMED, HAVE JUST BEEN  
ADMITTED TO THEIR FIRST COMMUNION.

“Wherefore criest thou unto Me? speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.”—Ex. xiv. 15.

GOD has given you strength and guidance : use the one, be led by the other ; but what you do, *do yourselves*. The HOLY GHOST will not drive you, neither will He compel you, neither will He wait for you if you choose to sit still when the rest are following. He will do none of these things, and you need not expect that He will. He will “lead the way,”<sup>1</sup> and your business is “to go forward,”—active exertion under God’s guidance is what is expected from you now,—NOT WORDS, BUT DEEDS. “Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward.” This is what God said to those whom He had chosen in those days at the very beginning of their journey, and this was His way of dealing with them throughout the whole of it.

Imagine to yourselves the feelings of the children of Israel, when—having been delivered from the land of bondage by their passage through the *water*, having been preserved from him who was too strong for them by the visible interposition of Divine grace,—having been led to the mount of God, and there instructed in

<sup>1</sup> He will lead the way unto all truth—ὁδηγήσει—evidently alluding this.



God's Law and Word from the mouth of His appointed servant,—they were bid boldly to set forward in their march to the promised land.

Up to the time of their arrival in the wilderness into which God had called them, they had been but imperfectly instructed either in God's commands or God's intentions towards them; they had not till then been supernaturally strengthened or supernaturally nourished; the Rock of flowing waters had not yet followed them, nor had the manna fallen from heaven; and God, Who is no austere Master to reap where He has not sowed, had hitherto overlooked their murmurings, their faint-heartedness, and their faithless fears; no punishment had as yet fallen upon them, because though preserved from dangers, they had not as yet been strengthened for their journey.

Think what the feelings of this people must have been, their minds now opened for the first time to the full perception of the great things that had been done for them; the Law just printed on their hearts,—hearts already prepared by gratitude to receive it; their daily bread assured to them; the water flowing perpetually for them in the desert; full of holy confidence,—a confidence entirely justified by what they had seen; full of hopes, which hopes they might easily and speedily have realised, had they but “led the rest of their lives according to this beginning.”

Think of this, for this is just the situation in which you yourselves are placed. You are now what the ancients used to call “perfect Christians,”—that is to say, you have received the “*whole* armour of God, and are fully enabled thereby to stand against the wiles of the devil,” to work out your own salvation, and to win your way to the promised land. “Why callest thou upon Me?” said God, when the people hesitated, looking rather upon their dangers than upon their SAVIOUR. “Why callest thou upon Me? Speak to the people that they go forward.” God has opened a way before you, walk in it; God has placed the means of safety in your hands, use them. He will not save those who do not

care about their salvation, nor allow those to display their armour who are too idle to fight with it when they have it. The Sword of the Spirit is useless if it is forever hidden in its sheath, and the Shield of Faith worse than useless,—it is an absolute incumbrance,—if it is suffered to hang idly by our side.

I speak to you as Moses spoke to God's chosen in old time, and I say to you,—Go forward ! win your way to the promised land ! and be not like the men of Ephraim, who, “being harnessed, and carrying bows, turned them back in the day of battle.”

And now, take another warning by the Israelites in the wilderness. God's army did not straggle into the promised land one by one, each by the road which it pleased him best to take ; the possibility of so doing never occurred to God's soldiers then. Faithless they were on many occasions, but their faithlessness never amounted to such a point as to lead them to desert from His army. They never fancied that they could subdue their enemies singly, or with safety to themselves break off from the fellowship of their brethren.

Neither must you. You are CHRIST's faithful soldiers, as well as His servants ; you belong to His army, you are bound by the rules and discipline of His army, and you must enter the promised land as part of that army ; or you must die in the wilderness, as any other straggler from the army of Israel would have done. The Pillar of the Cloud was a guide to the host, not to any individual of that host who took a different road from his brethren. All these things were written as a type for you ; you see that it is so, and you cannot take one part of a type without taking the other.

And when I say they were written for you, I mean for you as CHRIST's sworn soldiers. I do not mean to tell you that no one can be saved except in the Church, because I do not think the Bible would bear me out in saying so. The Bible is the book of God's Church, and what we read there relates to the members of that Church, and to none else.<sup>1</sup> That God has ten thousand

<sup>1</sup> This is the especial error of the Church of Rome, upon which it as-

ways of saving all sorts of heathens and all sorts of Dissenters, I have no manner of doubt: CHRIST died not for the Church only, "but for all mankind." But in all this you are in no way personally concerned; you are neither heathens nor Dissenters, and if *you* are saved, it must be as the Book of your own Law points out, and in no other way whatever. Now, you are sworn to be God's soldiers, and to belong to His army, the Church; that army is marching towards the Promised Land, the heads of its columns have already crossed the Jordan, whose waters have rolled back as soon as "the feet of the priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant touched them." If you pass in that army, the waters are stayed for you, as they are for the rest of God's faithful soldiers; if you like to leave that army, you are at perfect liberty to do so, just as much as any Israelite in those days; but if you do, you must naturally expect the consequence that would have awaited him,—that when "the soles of the priests' feet are lifted into the dry land, the waters of Jordan will be found to have returned to their place, and will be flowing over their banks as heretofore," and that if you

serts that there is no salvation for any beyond the pale of the Church. If the Bible were the Book of the whole world, they would be perfectly justified in saying so, but it is not. In that Bible we are expressly told that the Gentiles are a law unto themselves; and this is quite evident if we take the Bible in detail. The Law of Moses was the Law of God's chosen people, and of no other nation upon earth; the Psalms were the religious worship of God's chosen people, and the Prophets, except in those rare instances where other nations are mentioned by name, were the Prophets of God's chosen people. But the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, are the Old Testament. Again, when the boundaries of God's chosen people were enlarged, and the Gentile nations were admitted one by one to the fold, (Macedonia before Troas for instance,) the Gospels were written for those who were in the Apostles' fellowship. The Epistles specially, and most of them by name, were addressed to the faithful, and to none others, and the Revelation is the prophetic history of God's Church; but the Gospels, Epistles, and Revelation, make up the New Testament. No man is bound by the provisions of a covenant into which he has not entered; but when he has entered into it, he must abide by its provisions. The Church then becomes his Church; and the Bible, the Book of that Church, becomes the Book whereby he must be judged. For the Churchman, there is no salvation beyond the pale of the Church. We know nothing about other men.

would pass, you must pass now upon your own resources, not by the protection of God's Ark, the Church, and God's covenants therein contained.

Hitherto I have said very little to you about the Church. I have spoken to you about your duties to God, your duties to one another, your duties to yourselves. I have treated you hitherto as religious individuals, rather than as members belonging to a religious body.

And so does the Church; she shows you plainly that you must learn your duties as individuals before you learn your duties as members of a society. If you will compare the lessons taught between Christmas and Easter, with those taught between Easter and Whitsuntide, you will see that, before teaching you the things "pertaining to the kingdom of God,"—that is to say, before explaining to you the constitution of the Church of CHRIST as a kingdom, she teaches you closely and diligently her requirements from you as individuals.

To understand the whole counsel of God, you must view it in two lights,—as a private and personal obligation and covenant, lying upon every one of us just as much as if there were not another person in the whole world beside ourselves; and as the bond of a society of which each one of us is only a constituent part.

It is the permitting ourselves to contemplate one only of these two sides of the question, that leads us into the errors of Romanism or Protestantism as the case may be. The Romanist allows his sense of personal responsibility to merge in his social duties and privileges, while the mere Protestant, viewing his religion as a personal matter, which it is, errs in making it *exclusively* personal, which it is not; he forgets that, if the Church of CHRIST be indeed a kingdom, that very word implies other subjects of it besides himself, who are bound by the same laws, who enjoy the same privileges, and on whose co-operation he is as much dependent as any one member of the natural body is dependent on the co-operation of any other; and that it implies also one code of laws binding upon all these individuals alike,



which cannot be relaxed or altered to suit the private fancies or requirements of any private person.

If this be the case, you must see that, as Christian Churchmen, two sets of duties are incumbent upon you, and that when two are incumbent, the discharge of one, how complete and perfect soever it be, cannot be sufficient for salvation.

This is the Church's idea of our duty, and you will observe that she carries it out strictly and consistently in every part of her teaching. I do not mean only by appointing a season for our instruction in our duties as individuals, and a season for our instruction as Churchmen; she does that, but she also makes this distinction in all her services wherever she carries her instruction into practice:—We pray in common because we need in common God's grace; and we all equally need God's forgiveness, since in the Body of CHRIST no member can suffer without all the members suffering with it, therefore we all ask for it together. We thank God in common, for we all enjoy the same daily preservation,—we all enjoy the blessings of this life; the inestimable love shown in the redemption of the world by our LORD JESUS CHRIST was for all alike; we have all the means of grace and the hopes of glory. In all these points, therefore, the Church considers us collectively, as one body, as the Church.

But when the Great FATHER of that one Family begins to divide unto His sons "the portion of His substance that falleth to them,"—when the Great Master of that one Household begins to portion out His talents according to each man's ability, or capacity, or need,—then it is that the Church considers us and treats us as individuals. Look at the Office of Confirmation which you have just passed through, and watch the meaning of its rubrics. The Bishop, when he was praying to God *for* you, prayed for you all collectively, as for members of one Church; but when he came to bestow on you that grace which he had prayed for, it was not collectively, but individually,—each had his own portion, such as each individually required. And this is



pointed out by the Prayer Book in a most marked manner; the words are, "He shall lay his hand upon the head of each one of them *severally*, saying, Defend, O LORD, *this Thy child*,"<sup>1</sup> not these Thy children,—implying that the particular child on whose head his hand was then laid, besides being a member of the Church, was also an individual being, as complete in himself, as responsible in himself, and as much requiring the particular portion of strengthening grace assigned by God to him, as if he had the whole Body of CHRIST's Church in his own person. This is the way the Church teaches, at one and the same time, the two doctrines of individual responsibility and collective relationship.

The idea of this double duty, collective and personal, is carried out in every similar service. Whenever we pray for grace and receive grace, we pray for it collectively and receive it individually. However many children we bring to the sacrament of Baptism, we pray, for them all, that God would "sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin, and would grant that [all] these children who are to be baptized therein may receive the fulness of His grace;" but when we dispense to them the grace so prayed for, we take them one by one, and call them by their individual name, that name by which they will hereafter be called singly to judgment: and we say, "I baptize *thee* in the

<sup>1</sup> It is very remarkable that the word used here is "child," and that the word "servant" is specially added in brackets in order to provide for exceptional cases, so that we are quite certain that child means child in age as distinguished from a grown person. The idea of the English Church therefore is, that *children* should be confirmed "so soon as they can say the Creed, the LORD's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose." The modern innovation, of confirming grown people *only* has arisen from a faithless substitution of man's understanding for God's grace. It is entirely a modern idea, sanctioned neither by precedent, nor by the laws of the English Church, nor by the customs of any Church on earth, ancient or modern. It crept into our Church during the scepticism of the Georgian era, and is continued now, wherever it is continued, from the inexperience of our Bishops, who, selected from schools, universities, or private tutorship, have in very few instances ever prepared a single catechumen for Confirmation; and thus, unable to judge for themselves, copy their predecessors' mistakes.

name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST."

So also in the Holy Communion. We pray together, we confess together, we are even absolved together, each man being left to appropriate to his own need the general message; our alms are presented in common, the elements are consecrated for all alike, for "we are all one Body and one Bread." But when those very same elements are delivered, that is to say, when the nourishment of CHRIST's Body and Blood is actually imparted, it is in those proportions which each individually requires according to his own personal need, and at his own personal responsibility, like the Israelites, we gather each one for himself, but so that "he that gathers much has nothing over, and he that gathers little has no lack." The Bread and the Wine, therefore, are not given to all at once, but to each individually; "and when he [the Minister] delivereth the Bread or the Cup to any *one*, he shall say, The Body of CHRIST, which was given, or the Blood of CHRIST, which was shed for THEE, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life," implying that CHRIST's Body was broken and CHRIST's Blood shed for that individual, just as much and just as entirely as if there had not been another individual in the whole world besides.

This is the Church's teaching throughout, and it is not safe for us if we ever lose sight of it. We are saved as members of CHRIST's Body, and we shall be judged to have preserved or forfeited our membership according to our personal discharge of our personal responsibilities.

You have enough to think about now in what I have already told you. Be very sure of this, that nothing is ever ordained or done in the Church without some good reason, and that it is your duty as Churchmen *first* to obey your Church, and *then* to find out the reason, and to order the rest of your lives by it. Whatever you may have been hitherto, from henceforth after you have been instructed and prayed for collectively, and strengthened and nourished for your work individually, you

have a double character to maintain in God's service, your private character and your public character. You have hitherto been so fully taught by the Church, that the man of God is furnished unto all good works, and you have now been armed by the LORD Himself. Take your own places therefore now in God's army; let those places be, "that state of life into which it has pleased God to call you;" do your DUTY in them: be like God's army mentioned by the prophet Joel, "none of you break your ranks." God has placed you in your own particular state in this life,—the Church, by His command, has instructed you separately how to do your duty in that state,—CHRIST points to the mark of the prize of His high calling,—He unfurls the Royal Banner of the Cross,—He places Himself at your head. Be ready,—be willing,—be steady in your own places,—keep your eyes fixed on the One Great Leader of the One Great Army. And now march forward!

## AUTHORITIES ON CONFESSION.

“And if by this means he cannot quiet his own conscience, but requireth further help or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God’s Word, and open his grief.”—*Exhortation to the Holy Communion.*

### AD CLERUM.

It is inconceivable how any doubt or question could ever have arisen in men’s minds on the subject of auricular Confession. Scripture, reason, common sense, and the English Church, are so completely in accordance on this point, that there seems no room for difference of opinion.

If the Bible had never said anything about the matter, the Church would have been fully warranted by common sense, not perhaps in enforcing as a doctrine, but certainly in recommending as an act of salutary discipline, that we should distrust our own judgment in our own case, be suspicious of our own hearts, which we know are deceitful above all things, and consult those who, by their very calling, may be considered as experienced in God’s Law, as to its bearing on our lives and conduct generally, and on our actions in any particular instances.

If we reason by analogy, the common analogy of our bodily ailments would completely bear us out. Whenever we feel ill at ease in our body, our first idea is to cure ourselves; we try simple and safe remedies to which we are accustomed, and which we understand. If by these means we can cure ourselves, we are satisfied, but if we do not feel that they cure us, if we re-

quire further help or counsel, we go to some discreet and learned physician and open our grief; we detail our symptoms to him,—that is to say, we confess ourselves to him, and, so far as our particular need requires, we do it without reserve. We distrust our own judgment of ourselves, we put our confidence in him, and follow his advice both with respect to the special medicines which he prescribes and the general diet which he recommends.

We place our confidence in our physician rather than in ourselves upon two separate reasons,—the learning and experience of the physician, and our distrust of our own discrimination and impartiality in our own case. So absolutely is this last reason admitted, that even a physician will not take upon him to prescribe for himself, but confesses, so to speak, to some other physician, possibly less learned than himself, and follows his prescriptions rather than his own, upon the evident and admitted axiom that no man is a judge in his own cause.

Not only is the analogy between the disorders of the body and those of the soul evident and self-suggesting, but it is scriptural also. Our SAVIOUR is constantly described as the Great Physician of our souls, and those who act in His name, by His commission and under His authority, are spiritual physicians also.

Surely this analogy will be found perfect throughout. If we are so liable to deceive ourselves on our bodily symptoms, that no one, however learned, will venture to prescribe for himself in dangerous cases, upon his own judgment of his own symptoms, much more are we liable to be deceived in our mental symptoms, where so many more disturbing influences are at work. If a special education is necessary for the physician of the body, is it reasonable that no such special education should be required with respect to the physician of the soul?

No one will say that his body is superior to his soul; no one will say that the dangers which beset his body are greater or more numerous than the dangers which



beset his soul; nobody will say that the decay or corruption which affects his body is equal to the decay or corruption which affects his soul; or will imagine that the importance of his body's welfare is anything like the importance of his soul's welfare; no one passes through life, or hopes to pass through life, or thinks of passing through life, without at one time or other applying to the bodily physician for assistance; is it likely that it should be safe to do so without the assistance of the spiritual physician? If the Bible had been absolutely silent on the subject, the very analogy of the case would have suggested grave doubts. But the Bible has not been silent; it was hardly possible that where the act of discipline was of such obvious necessity, some records of it should not have been preserved in the history of God's people.

Besides the numerous instances of confession in that Book, where nothing is recorded except for our instruction and example, we have the definite command, "Confess your faults one to another."<sup>1</sup> There can be no question, then, about it as a matter of doctrine, as a matter of God's will. It is found in Scripture, and may be proved thereby. As a question of discipline, it may be good and salutary for a man to confess himself to some discreet and learned Minister of God's Word, or it may be good and salutary for him to confess himself to some one else; that may be ruled by the authority of man. But the Scriptural command is clear,—he is to confess himself to somebody.

And as a command plain and clear the Catholic Church received it. It ruled, no doubt, that the most proper person to receive confession was the Ambassador

<sup>1</sup> The sense put upon this passage by Burkitt and others, that of "confessing to persons injured by us the injuries which they have received at our hands," is the only sense which the passage will not bear etymologically. The word in the original is *παρὰπτώματα*, "falls," and it is not inaptly rendered in our version by the word "faults," which word is, properly speaking, the past participle of the verb to fail—to come short in our duty; and this suggests as its root "falli," to be deceived by the devil. In every way duty towards God is the idea suggested, rather than duty towards our neighbour.

of CHRIST—not only because he might reasonably be supposed to be best acquainted with the mind of his Master, and the precise meaning of that Master's laws and commandments, but also because to his keeping, as Steward of God's Mysteries, was entrusted the Message of forgiveness. But while the Church so ruled, it did not take upon itself to forbid confession to any one else; all confession is Scriptural, even open confession, such as is practised by the Wesleyans, but confession to God's Ministers is recommended upon the authority and experience of the Church:

And in this sense was the command of S. James taken up and acted upon from the very beginning of the Church. S. Clement, Bishop of Rome, in a letter written not later than the year 83, and while many of the Apostles were alive, bids every one “into whose heart infidelity, or envy, or any such crime, had slyly crept (which certainly means sins against God), if he has any care of his soul, to confess his sin to the Bishop or Minister presiding over him, that by the Word of God and his saving counsel he may be healed.”<sup>1</sup>

In this advice S. Clement is followed by Origen, Gregory Nyssen, S. Basil, and by a host of others far too numerous even to refer to, who either counsel or command, upon similar occasions, that men “confess their sins to the Priest, who by his compassion and skilfulness was able to help their infirmities, and at once to take care both of their credit and their cure.”<sup>2</sup>

So, also, S. Augustine says, “Let us hear S. James the Apostle evidently commanding this very thing, and saying, Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, because in this our LORD hath set us an example.”<sup>3</sup> And again, he says, “We are admonished throughout the whole Scripture to confess our sins con-

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Ep. i. Non erubescat qui animæ suæ curam gerit hæc confiteri ei qui præest, ut ab ipso per verbum Dei et consilium salubre curetur.

<sup>2</sup> Nyssen de Pœnitentia, vol. iii. p. 176. Basil, Regul. Brev. Resp. 229. Origen, Hom. ii. in Ps. xxxvii. Bingham, Antiq.

<sup>3</sup> Aug. Tract. 58.

tinually and humbly, not only to God, but to holy men that fear God.”<sup>1</sup>

It would be easy to show that none of these ancient fathers held the doctrine of confession and the interpretation of the passage of S. James on which it mainly rests, in any other sense than that in which the Church of England holds it now. S. Basil, for instance, whom I have already quoted as recommending confession, would never have written thus,—“I do not make confession with my lips to appear to the world, but inwardly in my heart, where no eye sees,”<sup>2</sup>—if he had considered confession to the Priest as *compulsory* or *necessary* to salvation.

But on this point there is very little necessity of multiplying quotations. In these days there is no great fear lest the ordinance of confession be overstrained and held in too high estimation: the danger is that it should be forgotten as a means of grace entirely, and that an apostolic command and a salutary practice, that has descended to us from the earliest times of the Church, should fall into disuse. For those who have any Romanists or Romanizers to contend against, “Daillé de Confessione Auriculari” will furnish arguments enough, and quotations too, for though Daillé was a bitter controversialist as well as a Calvinistic Protestant, he was also a learned man. From its dishonesty, his book is much more likely to strengthen Romanists than to convince opponents, and is therefore not a safe book to trust to unpractised hands; but he has collected a great many authorities which may be usefully handled by a Churchman. The fullest authority among the ancient fathers against the Romish theory of compulsory confession is S. Chrysostom, Homily 31, Homily de Pœnitentia, De Incomprehensibili Naturâ Dei, De Paralytico, and many other instances quoted by Bingham.

There is no one single point upon which the Reformers of all countries and of all shades of religious opinion were so uniformly agreed as on the subject of confession; whatever were their differences in other respects, this

<sup>1</sup> Aug. Hom. xii.

<sup>2</sup> Basil. in Ps. xxxvii. 8.

seems to be the point in which Lutheran, Calvinist, Church of England, and even the more moderate and scriptural of the Romish Church, were at one.

The Confession of Augsburg, which may be supposed to embody the sentiments of Luther and his followers, says, "With respect to the confession of sinners, [our churches] teach that *private* absolution is to be retained in the Church, although in confession the enumeration of sins may not be necessary; for the enumeration of all sins is impossible, according to the passage, Who can number up his secret faults?"<sup>1</sup>

Melancthon is still more explicit.

"It would be an impious thing, he says, to deprive the Church of private absolution, (with which he had just been connecting private confession as its indispensable correlative,) nor do those understand what the forgiveness of sinners or the power of the keys really is who hold lightly by special absolution."<sup>2</sup>

In the Swedish Church private confession was retained, and used to be held in the Church early on the morning of the Communion Sunday, absolution being then given by imposition of hands,—a relic of which still remains in the Communionskrift, a service of general confession held early on Communion Sundays, at which all who intend to communicate are obliged to be present, and at which they are absolved by a special form.<sup>3</sup>

In practice the Calvinist bodies are far more strict with respect to confession than the Lutheran, because, though neither profess to make it compulsory, yet in

<sup>1</sup> Articuli Fidei præcipui XII. De Confessione peccatorum. Docent (Ecclesiæ apud nos) quod Absolutio privata in Ecclesiâ retinenda est. Quamquam in Confessione non sit necessaria delictorum enumeratio, est enim impossibilis enumeratio omnium delictorum, juxta illud, "delicta quis intelligit?"

<sup>2</sup> Impium esset de Ecclesiâ privatum Absolutionem tollere. Neque quid sit remissio peccatorum aut potestas clavium intelligunt si qui privatam absolutionem aspernantur.

<sup>3</sup> If this your confession of sins be sincere, if there be earnestness in your amendment, and if your faith be true, then do I, as a minister of JESUS CHRIST, give you assurance that GOD of His grace, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST, has forgiven you all your sins.—*Swedish Prayer Book.*



practice many of their pastors, by refusing Communion to those who do not receive a ticket of admission which is to be obtained from the Pastor and after a private conference with him, do make it quite as compulsory as the Romanists themselves. This is particularly observable among the Scotch Presbyterians, among whom a Romish controversialist might easily collect instances of priestly tyranny quite equal to any ascribed to his own Church, and possibly of other corruptions also. Calvin's own ideas upon the subject may be found in his Institutes of the Christian Religion.

“Moreover, the Scripture sanctions two kinds of private confession . . . . In the former species of confession, though James, by not expressly appointing any one into whose bosom we should disburthen ourselves, leaves us quite at liberty to confess to any member of the Church who shall appear to us most suitable, yet, since the Pastors must generally be considered more proper than others, we ought chiefly to make choice of them. I say that they are more suitable than others, since, in their very vocation to the ministry, they are *designated by the LORD* to instruct, and to subdue and to correct our sins, and to console us with the confidence of pardon. For though the office of mutual admonition and reproof is committed to all, yet it is especially confided to ministers; and so, while we ought all mutually to console and confirm each other in a confidence of the Divine mercy, yet we see that ministers are *constituted witnesses and sureties of it*, that they may afford our consciences a stronger assurance of the remission of sins, insomuch that *they themselves are said to remit and to loose souls*. (S. Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18; S. John xx. 23.) When you find this attributed to them, consider that it is for your benefit. Therefore, let every believer remember that it is his duty, if he feels such secret anguish and affliction from a sense of his sins, that he cannot extricate himself without exterior aid,” [almost the very words used in our own exhortation,] “not to neglect the remedy offered to him by the LORD, which is, that in order to alleviate his distress, he should use private con-



fession with his Pastor, and, to obtain consolation, should privately implore his assistance, whose office is, both publicly and privately, to comfort the people of God with the doctrine of the Gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

Our own reformers are not less distinct and clear upon the subject.

Cranmer says, “God doth not speak to us with a voice sounding out of heaven, but He hath given the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the authority to forgive sins, to the ministers of His Church : wherefore, let him that is a sinner go to one of them ; let him acknowledge and confess his sin, and pray him that, according to God’s commandment, he will give him absolution, and comfort him with the word of grace and forgiveness of his sins. And when the minister doth so, he ought to believe that his sins are forgiven him in heaven.”

Ridley, in a letter dated from his prison in Oxford, writes thus :

“Confession unto the Minister which is able to instruct, correct, and inform the wounded conscience, indeed I ever thought might do much good to CHRIST’S congregation, and so I assure you I think this day.”

Latimer is of the same opinion.

“To speak of right and true confession, he says, would to God it were kept in England, for it is a good thing.”

As the foregoing quotations testify to the private and individual opinion of our earlier reformers on the subject of confession, so the Homilies drawn up in 1562, convey their public and authoritative declaration. In these they reject the Sacrament of Confession only in the same sense as the Sacraments of Baptism and the LORD’S Supper. The words are “Absolution is no *such* Sacrament as Baptism and the LORD’S Supper are, but, in a general acceptation, the name of Sacrament may be attributed to any thing whereby a holy thing is signified ;”<sup>2</sup> from which expressions we gather that in the opinions of the earlier English Reformers authoritatively put forth, (1.) There is a sense in which confession may

<sup>1</sup> Institutes of the Christian Religion, book iii., ch. 4, sec. 12.

<sup>2</sup> On Common Prayer and Sacraments, Part I.

be considered a Sacrament, and (2.) that it is a holy thing.

In the earlier times of the Reformation there seems to have been comparatively little controversy on the subject of confession. The Reformers of all countries were absolutely of the same mind upon it, and none of them appear to have considered the Romish innovations of any particular importance. They rejected them, one and all; but this rather because they considered them innovations, than because they attached much consequence to the matter.

This unconcerted unanimity proves two things, or, to speak more correctly, affords a very strong probability of them. (1st,) That the idea of confession thus adopted without concert by all the Reformers, must have been the real ancient and apostolic practice of the Church. (2nd, and almost a corollary from this,) That those points in which the Romanists differed from them, and which they one and all rejected though without seeing the importance of them, were really innovations.

Before speaking of those times when this subject took a lead in controversy, and thus called forth the mind of the English Church, we should do well to bear in mind the particular points in which the Romish doctrine of confession differed from that recognised by the Reformers.

These points were two in number. The Romanists considered confession compulsory, and they insisted on the enumeration of all remembered sins, whereas the Reformers were contented with recommending it as salutary, and required the enumeration of no other sins than those which the penitent thought good to confess.

This difference is but small in theory, as Jewel says most truly, but in practice it has assumed considerable importance; in fact, it makes all the distinction between an institution eminently salutary and apostolical, and an ordinance as eminently dangerous and injurious.

As soon as the doctrine of confession became a leading subject of controversy, the importance of this difference became evident, and then Romanists and Puritans alike began to turn their attention towards suppressing it, and

keeping it out of sight. The Puritan, who, professing to belong to the English Church, yet wished to bring the ordinance of confession into disrepute, naturally did his best to load it with all those abuses, which, flagrant as they were in ante-reformation times, were due, not to the ancient and apostolic discipline of confession, but to the Romish innovations upon it. While the Popish controversialist, on the other hand, would lead his readers to believe that, in suppressing the innovation, the Church had put aside and repudiated an ordinance as old as the Apostles themselves.

Thus it was that the English divines, in the days of Elizabeth and James I., were forced by their very position to show front against two opposite attacks upon the same point. And to this providential occurrence it is that we owe that clear and definite assertion of the doctrine itself as belonging to the English Church, which we find in almost all their works, together with the repudiation equally clear and equally distinct of the Romish theory, that Confession, to be efficacious, must be periodical, and must include all remembered sins.

It may seem singular that the Puritans, deriving their origin from those English Protestants, who during the Marian persecutions were forced to seek shelter in foreign countries, and who thus imbibed their peculiarities from Calvin and his followers, should repudiate and assail a doctrine which their own leader maintained and upheld; but this is the case invariably with bodies of Christians who cut themselves off from the Communion of CHRIST's Church. At first they seem to take with them all Church doctrines, to bring some of them it may be even into greater prominence and distinction, as Calvin did those of the Atonement. But they are like a branch severed from its parent stem, for awhile it preserves its leaves and looks lifelike, but one by one they droop and fall away. Calvin's own Church lost them all, and became Unitarian; by public act and general consent his followers denied their Redeemer. Many of the Puritans and their descendants in England have done so likewise, many an institution has separated from the Church on

Evangelical or Puritan principles, and in a very few generations has become Unitarian even here. That they have not all done so, is due not to any inherent life in themselves, but to their necessarily close connection with a Living Church, from which, from time to time, they borrow their vitality. It is to the existence of the Church among them that the English Dissenters to this day owe whatever they still possess of Christian life and Evangelical principles.

Controversialists have, sometimes, in the heat of controversy, gone the length of ascribing to the earlier English Reformers absolute dishonesty, such as, if proved against them, would invalidate their testimony on any point of doctrine whatever. Ignoring, perhaps ignorant of, the subsequent revisions of the Prayer Book by which the sentiments of the Reformation were sanctioned and sealed by the testimony of succeeding ages, they assert that the divines of Henry the Eighth's reign reformed the Church, not conscientiously, but, as far as they dared, as far as the temper of the times would permit them to go, leaving many necessary points, both of doctrine and discipline, to the developement of future generations.

This idea is not new nor original, it being precisely Newman's Apology for the modern innovations of Rome upon Apostolic or Primitive doctrine, and discipline, and which he also calls "Developement." But lest this argument, such as it is, should be used against the English discipline and practice of Confession, I will cite, in support of the earlier Reformers, the testimony of eminent Churchmen for the next two hundred years.

And first we will take Jewel, who was a young man and an University Student when the Fathers of the Reformation sealed their testimony with their blood.

I. "The APOLOGY," chap. i. divis. 1. "Moreover, we say, that CHRIST hath given to His ministers power to bind, to loose, to open, to shut. The difference that is between us and our adversaries," (says Bishop Jewel in his *Defence of the Apology, in loco*), "in this whole matter, is not very great, saving that it liketh well Mr. Harding to busy himself with needless quarrels without



cause.”<sup>1</sup> “Three kinds of Confession are expressed unto us in the Scriptures. The first made secretly unto God alone; the second, openly before the whole congregation; the third, privately unto our brother. Of the two former kinds there is no question. Touching the third, if it be discreetly used, to the greater comfort and better satisfaction of the penitent, without superstition or other ill, it is not in any wise by us reprovèd. The abuses and errors set apart, we do no more mislike a ‘private confession’ than a ‘private sermon.’”<sup>2</sup>

Again, “As for private Confession, abuses and errors set apart, as it is said before, we condemn it not, but leave it at liberty. And therein we may seem to follow the advice of Charles the Emperor in his late *Interim*; for thus he writeth: *Confessio et peccatorum enumeratio, ut non nimis laxanda est, ita vicissim non nimis astringenda.*”<sup>3</sup>

The value of Jewel’s testimony arises from the fact of his having been in his early days a personal friend and disciple of Peter Martyr, whom Calvin, at the request of Cranmer, had sent to England in the days of Edward VI., in order to consolidate the Reformation. He was also himself one of the fugitives who sought protection among the foreign reformers; he connects, as it were, the broken threads of the English Reformation, and unites the Elizabethan times, in which he rose to eminence, with those of Cranmer and Ridley.

Among the numerous controversialists who wrote on the subject of Confession in the latter years of Elizabeth and the reign of James I., we cannot find a more impartial witness than Hall, or one who was more likely to understand the difference between the Church of England and the Puritans. Hall himself was brought up a Puritan, such as Puritans were in the days when Whitgift was Archbishop: he was tutor and chaplain to Prince Henry, whose Puritan tendencies were so notorious, that it was considered a matter of congratulation to the Church that he died before his father. He was selected by James to attend the Synod of Dort, because

<sup>1</sup> Jelf’s Ed. of Jewel’s Works, vol. iv. p. 486.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. i. Div. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Jelf, iv. 506.



from his Puritan views he was most fitted for it; and it was principally from what he saw and heard while there, and the cruelties practised upon Barnevelt and Grotius, that he became so firm in his adherence to the Church, that in the next reign Laud selected him as the champion of Episcopacy against the Assembly of the Scottish Kirk.

Hall notices distinctly the difference which had now become apparent between Romish and English Confession.

II. BP. HALL. "That there is a lawful, commendable, beneficial use of Confession, was *never* denied by us; but to set men upon the rack, and to strain their souls up to a double pin of absolute necessity (both præcepti and medii) and of a strict particularity, and that by a screw of *Jus Divinum*, 'by God's Law,' is so mere a Roman novelty, that many ingenious authors of their own have willingly confessed it."

"Since our quarrel is not with confession itself, which may be of singular use and behoof, but with some tyrannous strains in the practice of it, which are the violent forcing and perfect fulness thereof; it shall be sufficient for us herein to stand upon our negative, that there is no Scripture in the whole Book of God wherein either such necessity or such entireness of Confession is commanded; a truth so clear, that it is generally confessed by their own Canonists.

"Did we question the lawfulness of Confession, we should be justly accountable for our grounds from the Scriptures of God; now that we cry down only some injurious circumstances therein, well may we require from the fautors thereof their warrants from God, which, if they cannot show, they are sufficiently convinced of a presumptuous obtrusion.

"Indeed our SAVIOUR said to His Apostles and their successors, *Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained* (S. John xx. 23;) but did He say, 'No sin shall be remitted, but what ye remit?' or, 'No sin shall be remitted by you but what is particularly numbered by you?'"

If Hall's testimony is valuable as that of one who had judged and weighed the differences between the Church and the Puritans, that of his contemporary Usher is no less so, as the opinion of one whose vocation had called him to examine the differences between the Churches of England and of Rome. While yet a layman, Usher was especially selected on account of his great theological learning and argumentative skill, to lecture on Sunday mornings at Dublin on the Romanist and Protestant controversy; and so celebrated was he as a controversialist, that in after life, when he had become Archbishop of Armagh, he was challenged by Lord Mordaunt, then a bigoted Papist, to dispute with his chaplain; and succeeded in three days, not only in utterly discomfiting his opponent, but in making a convert of his opponent's patron. So highly was his opinion valued by the Puritans, that Cromwell used to consult him on his celebrated plans for what he called the general interests of the Protestants of Europe; and at length, when he died, which was not till 1657, very shortly before Cromwell's own death, he caused him to be buried at the public expense in Westminster Abbey.

His testimony, however, will come with more effect if we give it through the medium of Chillingworth, the author of that celebrated Puritan dogma "The Bible, and the Bible only, the Religion of Protestants." Chillingworth, who was by about twenty years Usher's junior, writes thus:—

III. CHILLINGWORTH. "Having now mentioned Confession, and considering how much the doctrine of our holy mother the Church hath been traduced, not only by the malice and detraction of our professed enemies of the Church of Rome, but also by the *suspicious ignorance and partiality of her own children*; who out of a liking of the zeal, or rather fury of some former Protestant writers, have laid this for a ground of stating controversies of our religion,—that that is to be acknowledged for the doctrine of these reformed Churches, which is most opposite and contradicting to the Church of Rome: so that, as the case goes now,

controversies of religion are turned into private quarrels: and it is not so much the truth that is sought after, as the salving and curing the reputation of particular men. Give me leave, therefore, I pray you, to give you the state of the question, and the doctrine of our Church, in the words of one, who both now is, and for ever will worthily be, accounted the glory of this kingdom.

IV. USHER. “‘Be it known,’ saith he,<sup>1</sup> ‘to our adversaries of Rome,’ (I add also to our adversaries even of Great Britain, who set their private fancies for the doctrine of our Church,) ‘that no kind of Confession, either public or private, is disallowed by our Church, that is any way requisite for the due execution of that ancient power of the keys which CHRIST bestowed upon His Church. The thing which we reject is that new picklock of Sacramental Confession, obtruded upon men’s consciences, as a matter *necessary to salvation*, by the Canons of the late Conventicle of Trent, in the fourteenth session.’

“And this truth being so evident in Scripture, and in the writings of the ancient best times of the primitive Church, the safest interpreters of Scripture, I make no question but there will not be found one person amongst you, who, when he shall be in a calm, impartial disposition, will offer to deny it. For, I beseech you, give yourselves leave impartially to examine your own thoughts: can any man be so unreasonable as once to imagine with himself, that when our SAVIOUR, after His Resurrection, having received (as Himself saith) all power in heaven and earth,—having led captivity captive, came then to bestow gifts upon men; when He, I say, in so solemn a manner, (having first breathed upon His disciples, thereby conveying and insinuating the HOLY GHOST into their hearts,) renewed unto them, or rather confirmed and sealed unto them, that glorious commission which before He had given to Peter, sustaining, as it were, the person of the whole Church,—

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Usher’s “Answer to the Jesuit,” chapter on Confession, p. 84.

whereby He delegated to them an authority of binding and loosing sins upon earth, with a promise that the proceedings in the court of heaven should be directed and regulated by theirs on earth; can any man, I say, think so unworthily of our SAVIOUR, as to esteem these words of His for no better than compliment?—for nothing but court holy water?

“Yet so impudent have our adversaries of Rome been in their dealings with us, that they have dared to lay to our charge, as if we had so mean a conceit of our SAVIOUR’s gift of the keys; taking advantage, indeed, from the unwary expressions of some particular divines, who, out of too forward a zeal against the Church of Rome, have bended the staff too much the contrary way; and instead of taking away that intolerable burden of a Sacramental, necessary, universal Confession, have seemed to void and frustrate all use and exercise of the keys. . . . Therefore, in obedience to His [CHRIST’S] gracious will, and as I am warranted and even enjoined by my holy mother the Church of England expressly, in the Book of Common Prayer, in the Rubric for Visiting the Sick, (which doctrine this Church hath likewise embraced so far,) I beseech you that by your practice and use, you will not suffer that commission, which CHRIST hath given to His Ministers, to be a vain form of words, without any sense under them,—to be an antiquated, expired commission, of no use or validity in these days; but whensoever you find yourselves charged and oppressed, especially with such crimes as they call *peccata vastantia conscientiam*, such as do lay waste and depopulate the conscience, that you would have recourse to your spiritual physician, and freely disclose the nature and malignity of your disease, that he may be able, as the cause shall require, to proportion a remedy, either to search it with corrosives, or comfort and temper it with oil. And come not to him only with such a mind, as you would go to a learned man experienced in the Scriptures,—as one that can speak comfortable, quieting words to you,—but as to



one that hath authority delegated to him from God Himself, to absolve and acquit you of your sins.”<sup>1</sup>

No one is more fit to carry on the chain of testimony into the times subsequent to the Revolution of 1688 than Archbishop Sharp, who, born about fourteen years before the death of Usher, and taking Orders in the eighth year of Charles II., was suspended by his successor James, in the year 1686, and reduced to private life on account of his uncompromising defence of the English Church against the errors of Popery. So highly did William III. think of him, that he repeatedly solicited him to accept one of the sees vacated by the nonjuring Bishops, but in vain, until, by the death of Lamplugh, Archbishop of York, a see fell vacant by the course of nature, which he could therefore conscientiously accept. It was Sharp who took so prominent a part in meeting the endeavours of Frederick the Great to unite the Lutheran and Calvinist divisions of his subjects, and to reconcile them to the Church by procuring for them an Apostolical Succession from England. He may well be supposed to have understood fully the tenets of all the Protestant or Reformed bodies; and on the subject of Confession his testimony is the more valuable, that is to say, more impartial, more absolutely free from Romish bias, because he supports his arguments on that subject not from the writings of Churchmen either before or after the Reformation, but from those of Calvin, whom we have every reason to believe to have been, if not the author, at least the adviser of that very sentence of the Exhortation to Communion which forms the heading to this article.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chillingworth's Works, Oxford University Press edition, 1838, vol. iii. pp. 185—188.

<sup>2</sup> Our present exhortation is but slightly revised and altered from that of the second Prayer Book of Edward VI., and this was written in 1552, after the arrival of Bucer and Peter Martyr, two of Calvin's especial friends and followers, who had been invited to England by Cranmer for the express purpose of assisting him to re-construct or remodel the Liturgy.



V. ARCHBISHOP SHARP, of York, and CALVIN. "So that the Papists do very unjustly traduce and calumniate the Reformation, when they say that the Protestants are against private Confession. There is no such thing. There is *no Protestant Church* but gives it that due esteem and regard that it ought to have. All that they have done is to regulate it, to set it upon its true basis and foundation; which is done, not by requiring private Confession as a thing necessary, but by exhorting men to it, as a thing highly convenient in many cases. In all those instances where it can be useful, or serve any good purpose, it is both commanded and seriously advised; that is to say, where a sinner either needs direction and assistance for the overcoming some sin that he labours under, or where he is so overwhelmed with the burden of his sins, that he needs the help of some skilful person to explain to him the terms of the Gospel, to convince him from the Holy Scriptures that his repentance (as far as a judgment can be made of it) is true and sincere, and will be accepted of God; and lastly, upon the full examination of his state, and his judgment thereupon, to give him the absolution of the Church. In all these cases no Protestant (that understands his religion) is against private Confession. On the contrary, all the best writers of the Protestants, nay, all the public Confessions of the Protestants (which give an account of their faith) are mightily for it, and do seriously recommend it. Mr. Calvin hath fully expressed their sense as to this point.

" 'Let every faithful Christian,' (says he<sup>1</sup>) 'remember that when he is burdened and afflicted with the sense of his sins that he cannot ease himself without the help of others, it is then his duty not to neglect that remedy which the LORD hath prescribed to him, viz., that, for the easing of himself, he resort to private Confession with his pastor; and that for the gaining comfort to himself, he fetch in the assistance of him whose office it is both privately and publicly, to comfort the people of God by the doctrine of the Gospel. But yet this

<sup>1</sup> Calvin's Institutes, iii. 4, 12.

moderation is always to be used, that where God hath not laid impositions, we should not lay impositions on our own consciences. Hence it follows, that this private Confession ought to be free, and should not be required of all, but only recommended to those who find they have need of it.' Thus far Mr. Calvin; and in the same place where he doth thus recommend private Confession, doth he also speak great things of the benefits of private Absolution, in order to the easing and comforting afflicted consciences.

"And this sense of his is the general sense of the Protestants abroad. If there be any difference among them, it is that the Lutherans are more strict in requiring private Confession than either the French or Dutch Protestants are.

"As for our own Church, she has directly given her judgment in the matter, as we have now represented, viz., in the public exhortation which is to be read when notice is given of a Communion. There it is advised, that if there be any of the congregation 'that cannot by other means quiet his own conscience, but requireth comfort or counsel, then he should come to some discreet and learned Minister of God's Word and open his grief; that by the Ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of Absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience and avoiding all scruple and doubtfulness.'

"This is the doctrine of the Protestants concerning Confession, and this I think may be justified to all the world."

This chain of testimony carries us down from the times of the Reformation to the year 1744, (that is to say, till some time after the suppression of Convocation,) by a direct succession of witnesses, who have been selected purposely either for their connection with Puritanism at one period or other of their lives, or on account of some celebrated stand which they have made against Popery. It would be easy to find stronger expressions and more decided sentiments, if we were to seek them among the High Church divines, but such

testimony I have rejected. My object was impartiality ; I did not summon my witnesses to prove a preconceived opinion of my own, but to show what was the real mind of the Church of England at the different times in which my witnesses wrote. I did not therefore select, among, I might almost say, the hundreds I had to choose from, the most positive and decided partisans, but the most impartial writers I could find ; and, together with the quotations from their writings, I have given a short biography of each of them, in order to show why I do consider them impartial.

I might easily have brought down my catena beyond the times of George II., for even in the darkest days of Erastian sloth, God never left Himself without a witness ; at no time of its existence has the Church of England been without faithful Churchmen ; but it was unnecessary to do so. Two centuries of consecutive testimony is quite sufficient to prove that confession, such as it is now maintained by the English Church, is not only the doctrine of all Catholic antiquity, but pre-eminently the doctrine of the Reformation, both English and foreign.

The real value of tradition is testimony, not opinion. If a doctrine be not found in Scripture, it would be useless to go to any authority of the Fathers for it. The united authority of any number of Fathers, or of all the Fathers put together, could never make it an article of faith ; nevertheless, when a doctrine has been already found in Scripture, and may be proved thereby, the authority of any one Father is valuable as proving the interpretation that was put upon it in his day ; and the consent of a succession of Fathers, that is to say, the consent of a succession of ages and a variety of places, is a strong proof—a proof against which it would be dangerous to venture our own private judgment—that such was the original meaning of the passage, or, in other words, that such was the mind of CHRIST.

And as with doctrine in the Church Catholic, so with discipline,—that is to say, with administration of doctrine—in any branch of it. The rule itself lies in the

authorised documents of the particular Church, and nowhere else. Had there been nothing about confession in the Prayer Book of *our* Church, it would be useless to apply to Cranmer, or Ridley, or Jewel, or Hall, or Usher, or Sharp, for authority. This would give us merely the private opinion of so many individuals. But when we do possess the authorised rule, passed by the Clergy in Convocation, accepted by the laity in Parliament, confirmed by the Sovereign, revised and re-accepted in the two succeeding centuries by the Hampton Court and Savoy Conferences, then we may well go to the compilers and revisers of the Prayer Book to ascertain the meaning which they considered its services to bear, and to the framers of the rules to know the sense in which they framed them.

It is not very extraordinary that a confusion should have been made at first between the Roman and English idea of confession, because, as Jewel most truly remarks, in *theory* there is very little difference between confession as held by the Romish, and confession as held by the English Church, and probably in argument and on paper the Romish controversialist would show that there is no difference at all. In theory there may be little difference, but in practice that one word "compulsory," makes the difference very wide and very essential. The Romanist is instructed periodically, as a matter affecting his salvation, and as a *necessary* preparation to the Communion, to make a full confession of all his remembered sins, and to receive a special absolution for them, a certain penance being then and there affixed as a proof or sign of repentance, which does in fact and in practice amount to a condition of being received again into the full privileges of a faithful Christian.

The Anglican is instructed to make periodically a full confession of all his remembered sins to God; but, in case he *of his own judgment* considers that he "requireth further help or counsel," then he is earnestly invited to "open his grief" to God's Minister, who in all cases is bound to receive it, and in some special cases is bound also to urge it. But even in this case the confession is



not necessarily a confession of all remembered sins, but of those sins, and those only, upon which the penitent cannot "quiet his own conscience."

In the case of the English as of the Romish Church, the Priest has power to convey special absolution, if he thinks it expedient so to do ; but if he does not think it expedient, he is authorised in referring the penitent to the general forms of absolution prescribed by the Church, and instructing him to apply them to his own case ; while, as a necessary consequence of this, private penance, though recognised in the Homilies as a salutary discipline, becomes absolutely voluntary, the whole process of confession full or partial,—of absolution special or general,—and of penance, depending on the discretion and will of the penitent himself.

If men will give themselves the trouble to examine for themselves, without suffering their opinions to be biassed by popular clamour, they cannot fail to see that this voluntary element makes the whole difference between a very objectionable practice and a very salutary, not to say necessary, discipline.

It is very possible to conceive cases in which auricular confession would be injurious to a given individual, but then the chances are that that individual's own feelings would prevent him from seeking it,—or, if not his own feelings, the influence of his friends,—or, lastly, the discretion of the minister himself. It is perfectly true that, notwithstanding all these checks, indiscreet, and objectionable, and injurious confessions will be made from time to time ; but in the English Church these must always be the exceptional cases, and it is not right, either logically or morally, on account of exceptional cases, to condemn the discipline itself. The voluntary principle contained in it will and must correct all abuses ; no man will continue doing that which, though it may be salutary to others, he finds to be injurious to himself.

And it will be an equally sure corrective to any impropriety or indiscretion on the part of the priest. Not only is Confession itself voluntary, but the choice of a confessor is voluntary also ; and it is evident that those



penitents who conceive that Confession is a discipline salutary for their souls, but who are distrustful of their own parish Priest, will seek out "some other learned and discreet minister of God's Word," to whom they may safely "open their grief."

It is very remarkable that the practice of Confession, which for the first two centuries after the Reformation prevailed throughout the whole Scandinavian Church, has been greatly brought into disuse by an injudicious interference in this particular with the Christian liberty of the penitent. From the time when it was made compulsory that confession should be received by the parish priest and by none other, from that time the whole discipline of Confession fell into disuse.

The principle of Confession, then, in the English Church is absolute freedom. A man is told that there are cases in which Confession to man is salutary, and then it is left entirely to his own discretion whether he considers his own to be such a case or not. He may choose *whether* he will confess, *what* he will confess, *when* he will confess, *how much* and *how little* he will confess, and *to whom* he will confess. He is simply shown that the Church has such and such remedies, and then he is left the judge of his own needs, and the choice of his remedies is left in his own hands.

A similar discretion is lodged with the Parson, except so far as he is bound to receive the confession of a man desirous of making it. He is left just as much at liberty by the laws of his Church to advise his parish, generally from his pulpit, or specially and individually by his private exhortations, to confess their sins, as they are left at liberty to follow his advice or reject it.

Such things as these must necessarily be committed to the discretion of the Parson, because in all such cases no general rule can be drawn; that which would suit one disposition may not suit another, and therefore no Bishop, whatever might be his private opinion, could prohibit his priests from urging to confession while there is no law of the Church to back him, and while the text "confess your faults one to another" is found in his Bible.

But, on the other hand the Parson should remember that discretion involves responsibility; that is to say, that he is responsible to God for the exercise of that discretion committed to him; that it has been committed to him by the English Church, and that therefore, he, as a priest of that Church, is bound to ascertain what the mind of the English Church is, and to act up to it; and that though, in the exercise of his discretion, he is permitted to depart from it in special instances, as he must be from the nature of the case, yet that his general teaching must be, not what is not absolutely forbidden by the strict law of the Church, but what is the general scope and aim of that Church's teaching. The more free he is to depart from it in particular instances, the more bound should he consider himself to carry it out as a whole.

It is perfectly evident, from the tenour of the exhortation to Communion, as well as from the rubrics of the Visitation of the Sick, that the Church of England intends confession to God to be the general rule among her penitents; but that she permits and encourages confession to man in all cases of doubt and hesitation.

We gather therefore that habitual and periodical confession to man, though it may be salutary in certain cases, is not the *rule* of the English Church. A Clergyman therefore might be justified, according to his discretion, in advising any particular individual to make his confession habitual and periodical, because he is nowhere forbidden so to do; but if he were to teach the same generally and to all from his pulpit, he would not be authorised in so doing, because the general teaching of his Church would not bear him out. In this case he would not be making use of his discretion, but setting up his private judgment in opposition to his Church. It would be no justification to him that he could find any amount of precedent in the teaching of the Catholic Church in other parts and in other times; each Church is permitted to arrange its own discipline, provided that arrangement be not contrary to God's Word, and each Church does arrange its own discipline in accordance

with the character of its own people. It is very possible that habitual and periodical confession may be beneficial to an Italian, and if so, it would very probably be encouraged in an Italian Church, even in primitive times; because the Bible, approving the general principle of confession to man, does not forbid that this confession be periodically made. It certainly would be beneficial to an East Indian convert, because docility and following the guidance of others is the characteristic of that people: an Indian Bishop, therefore, would do well to make a diocesan rule to that effect, and he would be perfectly justified in so doing so long as he attempted no compulsion. But the very same discipline would be diametrically opposed to the manly, energetic, self-reliant, and self-responsible character of the Anglo-Saxon race; and therefore the Church of this country does well to discourage it. An Englishman is open to spiritual advice, and he is invited to it; he may be in spiritual doubts and difficulties touching some part of his conduct during some part of his life, and he is then recommended to open his grief; he may need even special absolution: if he is penitent and humbly desire it, it is not refused him. All this his Church considers necessary, or at least salutary for him; and all this she provides for him. Neither Priest nor Bishop may refuse it him; nothing can refuse it him short of an Act of Convocation backed by an Act of Parliament; that is to say, the united consent of the clergy and laity of his Church, signified by their lawful representatives in their lawful assemblies. Nay, more: so long as the Church of England holds forth this comfort to the penitent, her ministers are faithless to their trust if they do not publicly and continually announce that fact to their respective congregations, be their own private opinions on the subject what they may.

But this is all: beyond this her ministers have no right to go, because the Church, whose ministers they are, goes herself no farther. She has mapped out for her children their Christian course; she has taught, advised, warned; she has endued them with the spiritual

strength entrusted to her keeping; she supplies day by day the spiritual nourishment both of prayer and of communion, which she knows are necessary to enable them to work out their own salvation; and with all that, "stands by, ever watchful, ever anxious, ever ready and willing to direct; but she does not obtrude her direction on those who, by God's grace and their own earnest will and honest sense of duty are able to do without it.

As with the Church, so with her minister—he is *bound* to offer the consolation of Confession to all; he is *justified* in offering the guidance of habitual and periodical confession in special instances; but beyond that he is neither bound nor justified. And this is eminently and distinctively the doctrine of the Reformation, both English and foreign.

I should not have given so much space and time to showing the sentiments of the Church of England on this subject of Confession, in a book the design of which is practical rather than theoretical, had not the revival of this discipline which has begun to take place in our times been received with so much suspicion and hostility.

That it should have been so received, arises evidently from the fact, that English churchmen have confused the Confession of their own Church with the compulsory and Sacramental Confession of the Church of Rome. Having once done this, as they could hardly fail to see the objections to which the latter is obnoxious, it is no wonder that they reject not only it, but with it that ancient and Apostolic doctrine which they have confounded with it.

But that such ignorance should exist in our Church at all, that its children should ever have been suffered to confound things so essentially different, and thus to defraud themselves of their own privileges and means of grace, is in itself a most conclusive testimony against us, the Ministers of the English Church. It is evident, that had it not been for our own neglect of the ordinance, no such ignorance, and consequently no such prejudice, could ever have existed.

It is evident also, now that public attention and our



own attention has been called to the subject, if we permit our flock still to remain in ignorance of this their privilege, from any private opinion or prejudice that we ourselves may have on the matter, it is no longer negligence—it is something worse—it is unfaithfulness. Our duty as Ministers is not to pass judgment on the ordinances of the Church, but to administer them as we find them.

In all these subjects, and there are many of like character, the English Clergyman would do well to bear in mind the full meaning of the term "Minister," and by so doing he would cut off at once the most fruitful source of dissension that exists. Ministers are the servants of the Church.

It is perfectly true, that a certain latitude of sentiment on points of doctrine is granted by the Church to its members. Heresy cuts a man off from the Communion of the Faithful, but every error in doctrine is not a heresy, nor does a man cease to be a churchman by holding it.

But it is evident that this liberty of conscience, whatever it be, cannot be conceded to the Clergy. The Church has a doctrine to teach, and she engages servants to teach *that doctrine*. No one is forced to engage in this service. A man enters it, because, having previously examined what he will be required to teach, he "gives his unfeigned assent and consent to it;" but here his liberty of conscience ends, he has voluntarily surrendered it when he consented to be the servant of the Church; henceforward he has bound himself to teach *what* the Church teaches, *all* that the Church teaches, and *nothing but* what the Church teaches. He must now distinguish between "discretion" and "private judgment." The one he retains—much is committed to his discretion—but the other he has surrendered, like any other servant, by the act of taking service. His discretion he uses as to the means by which he may best carry out the intentions of the Church, whatever those intentions are, and as he is but fallible he may no doubt be indiscreet or mistaken in this or that particular.



But if he, the sworn servant of the Church, deliberately exercise his "private judgment," and go beyond those intentions, because he judges, when he has no right to judge at all, that something else may be more beneficial; or if he fall short of those intentions, because he thinks, when he has no right to think at all, that these intentions may be injurious; if he consciously, and wilfully, and after warning given, add to or take away from that Prayer Book, be it only one phrase or one word, to which, by the very act of taking service, he has given his "unfeigned assent and consent;" then, he is no longer a "Minister," he has falsified his word, he has stained his honour, he is an unfaithful servant, and a dishonest man.

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## TRINITY SUNDAY.

### THE WORK FINISHED.

#### GRUNTDVIG'S HYMN OF PRAISE TO THE TRINITY.

O MIGHTY GOD! we Thee adore,  
 From our heart's depths for evermore;  
 None is in glory like to Thee,  
 Through time and through eternity.  
 Thy Name is blessed by cherubim,  
 Thy Name is blessed by seraphim;  
 And songs of praise from earth ascend,  
 With Thine angelic choirs to blend:  
     Holy art Thou, our GOD!  
     Holy art Thou, our GOD!  
     Holy art Thou, our GOD!  
     LORD of Sabaoth.

#### GOD THE FATHER.

Thou didst create the ethereal span,  
 And in Thine Image madest man.  
 The Prophets prophesied of Thee,  
 The old Apostles preached of Thee,

The Martyr bands they lauded Thee  
 In their death-hour exultingly ;  
 And Christendom shall never cease  
 To bless Thee for both life and peace.  
 Yes, FATHER, praise from all bursts forth,  
 Because Thy SON brought peace to earth,  
 Because Thy HOLY GHOST doth give  
 The Word which makes Thy Church to live.

## GOD THE SON.

Thou King of Glory, SAVIOUR dear,  
 Blessed and welcome be Thou here ;  
 Thou laid'st Thy great dominion by,  
 On a poor Virgin's breast to lie,  
 Thou didst to glory consecrate  
 And heavenly joy our poor estate :  
 Our yoke, our sins, on Thee didst lay,  
 Our penance on the Cross didst pay ;  
 Didst rise triumphant from beneath,  
 And overcamest the power of death,  
 To heaven which opened didst arise,  
 Received with Angel-symphonies,  
 On GOD's right hand is now Thy place,  
 But on Thy Church abides Thy grace.

## GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

O HOLY GHOST, to us so dear,  
 Blessed and welcome be Thou here ;  
 Truth, goodness, joy Thou dost impart,  
 With life unto the Christian's heart.  
 As Thine Thou dost the nations claim,  
 And givest peace in JESUS' Name.  
 By Thee doth GOD a pledge accord,  
 That all is true in Mercy's Word ;  
 Thou art that Power Divine, Whose might  
 Doth give eternal life and light.

Hallelujah ! grief is o'er,  
 Paradise unsealed once more ;  
 Hallelujah, joy is sure,  
 GOD'S SPIRIT dwelleth with the poor ;  
 Hallelujah ! evermore  
 GOD hath bliss for us in store.

## THE TRINITY.

O Mighty God, we Thee adore  
From our heart's depths for evermore ;  
For Adam's race may join the hymn  
Of seraphim and cherubim,  
God's children now. Thy Church may raise  
Her ceaseless song of living praise,  
To GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON,  
And GOD the SPIRIT, Three in One.  
Hallelujah. Amen.

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